

NOVISSIMA VERBA: LAST WORDS

1920

BY

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TO
THE EARL OF ROSEBERY
K.G. &c. &c.
1889—1921

PREFATORY

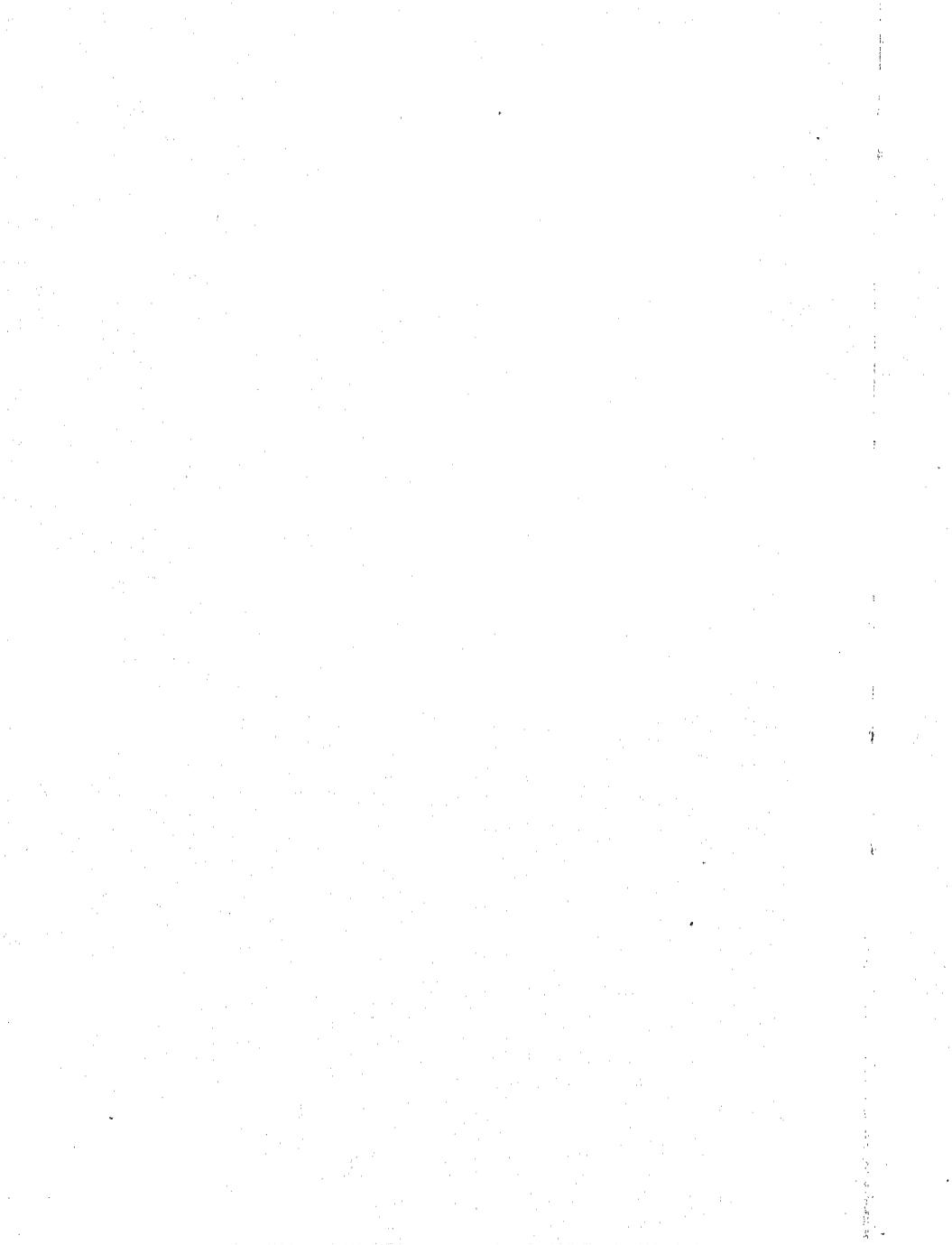
These Notes on events and books of the day were published in the "Fortnightly Review" month by month during the year 1920. It was not found necessary to make any addition, excision, or qualification to comments which, by the courtesy of the "Review," are now issued as they appeared at the time. After very careful consideration, I offer these essays as my deliberate judgment on urgent problems of State, still far from solution or settlement.

F. H.

Bath, October, 1921.

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JANUARY

— 1920 —

I

I TAKE up again my pen to record the occasional Thoughts which strike a very old observer of current events in the world of change and storm in which we live. When I noted them in the last year of the great war (*Obiter Scripta*, Chapman and Hall, 1919) the dominant fact was that “a war of Classes was about to supersede the war of Nations.” The Russian Revolution had sent a thrill of expectation through the democracy of the human race. There was coming on, I said, “a new Social Order as deep and as wide as any in the history of civilisation.” Two years have passed. And all these things seem to have increased tenfold. Russian revolution has been followed by that of Germany and of Austria. Kingdoms, Constitutions, Churches, peoples are in chaos. Above all, the relations of the great and the small nations, of Capital and of Labour, of trade and taxation, of the State and the citizen, seem about to convulse civilisation.

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I never joined the early enthusiasm for a League of Nations. It seemed to me to be premature—impos-

sible in the actual moral conditions of nations. In May, 1918, I wrote thus: "A general and peaceful League of Nations will never be formed until the conversion of mankind to a purer moral and religious form of life." It was the dream of an eloquent professor who roused grand hopes in the people—into which practical statesmen were drawn and almost forced to take part. In the golden age of Democracy the cool sense of political wisdom is swept away. Could nations work in harmony whilst old hatreds, ambitions, fears, jealousies, and greeds remained untamed? So far from curing them, the war had vastly stimulated them. When, after an orgy of glorification, amiabilities, and rhetoric, the Nations at last met in conference in Paris, the old passions and desires were bent on mastery.

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The world was kept in the dark whilst for six months the so-called deliberations went on. They were really disputes, changes, compromises, rather than deliberations. The grandiose Covenant of the President with his Fourteen Points was an academic programme with no statesmanship of concrete knowledge and foresight behind it. As applied to the real facts of the world, it needed incessant modification, reservations, exceptions, wherein the splendid enthusiasm of Mr. Wilson was continually baffled by diplomatists, who seemed to be using a tongue that he hardly understood. The statesmen and the soldiers of France insisted on strategic guarantees; Britain

was bound to claim separate membership for her Dominions, and had to keep Ireland, Egypt, Syria, and India out of the self-determination formula ; Italy was keen for the old Hun doctrine of grab ; Japan was out for Pacific islands and a good slice of China. In the midst of these very human Powers the President stood for international Brotherhood. He had a hard time of it !

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Clearly the only real statesman there was our Prime Minister. His energy, rapid intelligence, versatility, sense of realities, patience, self-command, and debating power over and over again saved the situation and dominated the Conference. He made the President see the hard facts that stood before his visions. He made the "Tiger" feel that soldiers must not override political necessities. He withstood Italian bandits and Polish, Roumanian, and Hungarian ambition. His obvious ignorance of the old Balance of Power, and his fortunate innocence of diplomatic vice made him the proper moderator of a new Europe and the childhood of young nations. These gifts made him as completely master of the Conference as Bismarck ever was at Berlin. It is a misfortune that Mr. Lloyd George is impulsive, almost too much the opportunist, the too-willing servant of the democracy he loves and from which he rose. Withal, he is the new leader of a new time.

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Mr. Wilson made fatal mistakes which stamp him as a pretentious amateur in State-craft. He came over with nothing but a vague Utopia, of which he had not worked out either the details or the obstacles. Next, he refused to accept the co-operation of experienced men opposed to him in party, and even of influential men of his own party. He affected to act as an autocrat ; and Europe was long ready to accept him as Dictator. He absented himself from his proper duties and his own people, so that for months he saw his authority to speak for America passing away into bitter opposition and distrust. He dragged the unwieldy Covenant into the Treaty, wasting months when the enemy were regaining their cohesion, and almost risked thereby a renewal of the war. Finally, in the Conference, his ignorance of the European imbroglio and his constant change of plan reduced the action of the Powers to apathy, inconsistencies, procrastination, and discredit.

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I am not judging Woodrow Wilson as an American statesman. He is clearly one of the noblest enthusiasts in the public Leaders of the world. His view of the dominant authority of a President of the Republic is entirely right ; and his proud insistence on unity of control is a true gospel in these days of anarchic inconstancy and servility to every gust of opinion. As an American President he is a worthy successor of Washington, and for the simpler and localised problems of the Republic he was almost an

ideal Chief Executive. But when he came to recast European civilisation, he was the Professor, the essayist, the idealist he ever was ; and he undertook a task for which he had no experience, and in which he was at fault. He is a great orator, but no debater : a great moralist, preacher, inspirer—but, like Demosthenes, Cicero, or Burke, he failed when he brought his idealism to compose the world after an awful war and a yet more sinister revolution. Idealists ruin things when they meddle with European convulsions, as the Tsar Alexander, Joseph II., and many more have found. Wilson has gone far to ruin Europe.

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At the moment of the Armistice the victorious Powers were paramount masters, and the Republic and its President were acknowledged as their Head. They could have made—they ought to have made—a conclusive Peace with the enemy in November, or at latest in December. Instead of that, they wasted two months in parades, banquets, oratory, and progresses in which Wilson figured as the Grand Pacifier. In coming to Europe he was bound to show that he had united all parties at home, as did Lloyd George, and that he fully represented the Republic. We took his word for it—till the crash came, like an aeroplane when the pilot has lost control. The tragedy was the result of over-weening arrogance and practical impotence in great statesmanship.

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In the end of 1918 the one thing urgent was Peace. Instead of making peace, Wilson led the nations and

their rulers to discuss his vague scheme of a Pacific League, as if the Conference were an International Congress of Jurists. He went about trying to indoctrinate the public of Europe with the Idealism of Peace much as in America he sought to indoctrinate the citizens with the Idealism, first of Neutrality and then of War to save Democracy. If there is one lesson in strategy the war has taught, it is the necessity of suddenness, of rapidity, of unity, of secrecy—the supreme power of Napoleon, Frederick the Great, Cromwell, and Foch. But, as dominated by Wilson, the lessons of peace learned by the Conferences were—dilatory discussion, change of plan, impracticable promises, postponed decisions. Europe, America, the world would have hailed a definite peace made in 1918. Wilson forced on us a truly *idealist* Covenant, which could not get to work until after 1920—if it can ever work then. The Paris Conference dragged on like that of Vienna—until Napoleon left Elba. The opponents in the Senate have a very strong case against the Covenant: a practical Peace they would have willingly accepted. Its danger to us all is evident—new wars, unrest, impossible tasks, and disappointment—if not despair—lurk in every class. If, by the double tragedy of Wilson's ignorance, obstinacy, presumption, and his physical collapse, the League of Nations is not yet dead, it is postponed at least for months—whilst chaos is at hand, and the vast burden of the League of Nations is thrown on England and France.

The war, and many documents, books and revelations of our time, have deeply changed the estimate of Frederick the Great which Carlyle in the 'sixties sought to establish. The King, as we see now, gave a great development to, though he was not at all the author of, Prussian militarism that has brought European civilisation so near to ruin. But, though Frederick enlarged the system he inherited, he is not responsible for the monstrous orgy of public crimes which his successors brought upon the world. One of the latest studies of the Prussian King is the *Life* by Norwood Young (Constable and Co., 8vo., 1919). This book, with all its industry and vigorous reasoning, is rather an indictment than an impartial history. Frederick was neither a blunderer, a poltroon, nor a monster—but a consummate master of the evil craft in which he and his contemporaries were steeped. Mr. Young made the same error as Carlyle—for his *Life* of Frederick deals solely with his wars. The three wars occupied only ten of the forty-six years of his reign. Of the thirty-six years of peace in which he reorganised Prussia and raised it to be the best-governed State of the eighteenth century, Carlyle told us not much. Mr. Young tells us almost nothing.

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The estimates of George Eliot called out by her centenary support, I think, what I have said in more than one review of her work that her reputation will surely, but slowly, revive from the depreciation into which younger generations, a new atmosphere, and a

more hustling life has cast it down of late. Again, sound criticism agrees with me in holding that her supreme gifts are in her earlier, lesser, and rural romances, not in the greater stories of her famous age. Though *Romola* is artificial, *Middlemarch* over-crowded with banalities, and *Daniel Deronda* unpleasant, her work as a whole will appeal to a cultured and serious audience as having a peculiar and noble form of romance. As do Milton and Wordsworth, she will retain her own body of readers, more select than numerous. And this will be a permanent light in English literature.

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I am deeply interested in the *Outspoken Essays* of the Dean of St. Paul's (Longmans, 1919). The new study of *Our Present Discontents* is indeed an independent survey of our chaotic condition by one who is at once a religious reformer and a social philosopher. It is not for me to analyse the essays on St. Paul, the Churches of Rome and of England, Cardinal Newman, Dr. Gore, and personal survival. But the Dean's unsparing review of current Democracy, Patriotism, Birth-rate, the Future of our Race, must command attention and rebuke the popular optimism of politicians and journalists who live by pleasing constituents and readers. The motto of this book, from Euripides, is—σκληρὸς ἀληθῆ. Much of it is, indeed, "a hard saying." In such times as ours, what we want are true things, however hard. It is the only chance of life.

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It is a hopeful sign to find a popular Prelate of our ancient Church attacking with resolute vigour and in a scientific spirit such complex social problems as Population, the statistics of birth and maternity, the future of our Race, Emigration, the Empire, Patriotism and international Brotherhood. What popular catchwords, what favourite nostrums, and mendacious fallacies are cut to the bone by the Dean's masterly use of the logical knife ! Withal, he speaks as a priest should, his scientific knowledge infused with religion as well as with morality. There is nothing in it of the vagueness of the popular sermon, of the sentimentalism of the philanthropist. It is the voice of a thinker on society who is entirely "out-spoken," who is not afraid to tell truths to which the ignorant masses are blind, and which the experienced are apt to conceal or disguise.

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The most terrible of his forecasts is the picture he draws of the future of the English race. "We are witnessing the decline of the industrial revolution of 160 years ago. The cancer of Industrialism has begun to mortify, and the end is in sight" (p. 101). In some 200 years, he says, the vicious Industrialism in which we live will have worked out its own exhaustion. The reckless waste of our coal, the concentrating life in unwholesome cities, and the ambition of organised Labour to get more in material value than it chooses to produce—will force our impossible population to be reduced and take to country life to

grow food. It is a dismal forecast—depending on the condition—if statesmen, workmen, and capitalists all continue to hold by their present habits and ideas. For my part, I think 200 years rather too liberal a limit of time.

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The recent revolution in our Parliamentary system has delivered over Britain and the Empire to millions of men and women who are utterly ignorant both of economic certainties and of international relations. These millions are really tame, well-meaning, potential Bolsheviks—if the essence of Bolshevism is the purpose to give the manual labourers the sole control of all labour and the entire enjoyment of the product of their work. To this Marxian result politicians, philanthropists, and social reformers combine to lead by a series of graduated and disguised surrenders. They promise, compromise, and capitulate. It is the “bedside manner” of our Ministers.

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I would not say that mortification has begun, and I look for a recovery of health within two generations rather than 200 years. But in my darker hours I can see a vision of our glorious England reduced, after passing through long and cruel sufferings, to be forced to grow its own food, to live again in pure air and in touch with Nature, and without the rage for artificial enjoyments. Our beautiful, but very moderate, island would be more like Ireland, or even like

Holland after its decline at the end of the seventeenth century. Many States of our English race will be prosperous and growing in many parts of the globe. In the meantime, half our present population will enjoy a stationary condition of health, contentment, and peace. The fate of the other half—is silence.

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The Dean, as I have said, is quite as much a reformer in religious as in social organisation. Indeed, the larger part of his book is devoted to movements in Churches, Roman and Anglican, and to the spiritual problems of mysticism and immortality. With these I have no business to deal. But, as a Churchman, Dean Inge is quite as outspoken as he is on Socialism. “A profound reconstruction is demanded,” he says. “The new type of Christianity will be more Christian than the old, because it will be more moral” (p. 135, essay on Bishop Gore and the Church of England). We all want to see in detail the Dean’s new type of Christianity.

I have enjoyed the essay on the Greek Anthology in Sir Edward Cook’s new (and, alas! his last) book, *More Literary Recreations* (Macmillan, 1919)—a very pleasant book of literary criticism, which challenges thought even if we do not accept all its verdicts. His account of these exquisite short poems, and of the incessant attempts to translate them, occupies more than a third of the book. These pages, with about 100 pages on Classical quotations and Pliny’s *Letters*, make delightful reading. Would that our young

poets of to-day would study these epigrams and mottoes—their clarity, simplicity, restraint, pathos. Not a word is wasted in needless epithets, not a line but has a plain thought, startling in its brevity, and yet haunting the memory by its grace. The history of this wonderful collection is a key to the Greek genius—by the long ages over which it lived, and grew, the various lands and the diverse types of culture in which it flourished.

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The non-scientific public is quite right in taking a lively interest in Professor Einstein's new theory of Space, but quite wrong if they ask to have the theory made plain to them. In detail, it can only be made intelligible to those who are versed in the higher mathematics, and indeed the very recent learning *inter apices* of the highest mathematics. They who carefully study all that has been published by Professor Eddington, Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. Crommelin, Professor Wildon Carr, and others in the *Times*, may see three things: (1) that a profound shock has been given to current ideas about Space, Time, and all *absolute* theories about the Universe; (2) that for practical purposes our ordinary geometry and astronomy need hardly any correction; (3) that they who desire to follow out Professor Einstein's vast, subtle, and intricate calculations must steep themselves in the very recent geometry of four dimensions and the like mysterious novelties.

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For myself, making no pretension to such learning, I am interested only in the signal reaction of the new theory on the general philosophy of the Relative. All the more so, because exactly fifty years ago I wrote an essay to show that all *absolute* ideas about Space, Time, the Universe, or the geometric and physical conditions of the world outside the range of our immediate observations are futile. "We have not, and cannot have, any proof that our laws of nature and of things exist outside of the human mind in the mode in which we conceive them." "Does the Infinite Universe through Space conform to the modes of mind of the human mites which inhabit this planetary speck?" The objective order of the Universe, I wrote, may be utterly different from our conceptions of it : even Space, Time, $\text{\textAE}ther$, Gravitation are only our human ideas, the best explanation of our observations we have yet given. It is possible they are only our dreams. For myself, the Einstein "revolution in science" has given me no shock. It only falls in with the philosophy of Relativity which I have preached all my life.

FEBRUARY

- 1920 -

II

PEACE is made—by us with some of our enemies!—peace is not made by the biggest and most powerful of our comrades in war. Peace is made—but not rest. Peace opens a vast array of most arduous and menacing problems. Our condition seems more full of toil and peril than it was in the autumn of 1918. In the first place, the so-called Treaty of Peace and its monstrous Covenant are impossible, ruinous, suicidal—and must at once be recast. To modify it in detail is not enough. It must be recast, and that in the absence of its principal author. And then, inextricably entangled in the Treaty and the Covenant, tremendous obligations lie on us to reconstruct nations in Europe and in Asia. At the same time, our own Parliamentary system is in dissolution within and without; and Labour problems are at least as numerous, as urgent, and as perplexing as they ever before have been. On Britain there lies a task as heavy as any in its long, glorious history.

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The withdrawal of the American Republic from the cause of the Allies—even if it be not final but temporary—has reduced Europe to a series of dilemmas. The Treaty of Peace hangs on the Covenant; the Covenant hangs on an effective League of Nations; the operative League of Nations was designed to meet the action of Mr. Wilson, who is designated to summon the Sessions, as also he was the official and irremovable President of the United States. In this colossal stale-mate of all the Great Powers little really permanent can be settled. Their vast schemes of reconstruction are still hardly more than drafts and programmes. These vast schemes were feasible only by the enormous forces and the paramount authority which they held collectively at the Armistice. In November, 1918, they had five millions of men in arms flushed with victory, and nothing but desperate rabbles to resist them. They could have imposed their terms on all Europe. Fourteen months have passed. The people clamoured to be demobilised; the five millions are now hardly one million. For a year the Powers have wrangled and intrigued against each other. Their credit is gone; they are defied, insulted, and tricked; their own people complain and threaten them at home. And the only one of the Powers which was not exhausted and ruined will have no more to do with them, and refuses to share in the awful responsibilities she has drawn on them.



For the moment it is in vain to hope that the American people will soon relent and bring help, in vain to call upon the League of Nations. As well call upon Baal. Until the League is a solid, united, and recognised power, with international authority, and controlling at least armies of a million or more, perfectly equipped, they can do nothing except perorate and pass more orders. They have not one-tenth of the force and the prestige they possessed in 1918. They can raise no new armies, no more Victory Loans. They are war-weary and almost insolvent. Whilst they talk of reorganising the Middle Europe, settling in peace the Balkans, removing the Turkish Power from Europe, protecting Armenia, Syria and Palestine, reconstructing Persia and Mesopotamia—do they realise that any one of these may mean a new war? Still more, do they realise that our new masters, twenty millions of voters, the advancing party of labour, will vote neither men nor money for war?

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The key to the Labour problems of the world lies in the attitude of workmen to the principles as well as to the practice of the Soviet Government of Russia. None but the more violent groups of Socialists have anything but repudiation of the ferocious tyranny with which Lenin and Trotsky are trying to carry out the fundamental doctrines of the Marxian creed. The important question is—How far do Socialists generally hold by the basis of the Bolshevik system—

the domination of society by the manual labourers, by force, *if and when* possible and necessary? Light may be thrown on this by studying a book put out by the Independent Labour Party in their Library and published by the National Labour Press of Manchester, London, and Leicester—*The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, by Paul Kautsky, now translated by H. J. Stenning. Kautsky, as the editor very truly says, is the most eminent Socialist writer of the Continent. An Austrian by birth, he lived in Germany and in England, has worked all his life with the Minority Socialists, edited the remains of Karl Marx, and in 1882 founded the *Neue Zeit*.

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Karl Kautsky is the ablest and most systematic exponent of Socialism of the Marxian type, of which he is, with some differences, the legitimate heir. His book, which is a criticism of Russian Bolshevism, was published just before the Armistice of 1918 in Vienna. The preface to the English translation, whilst admitting that "they have made mistakes," that the Soviet Government "have accomplished wonderful achievements," warns British Socialists of the difference between the conditions of Russia and those in Western countries, "between what may be expedient as a temporary measure and what is best for stable conditions." Kautsky's whole argument, which is close and judicial, is that the *dictatorship* of the Soviets is not *democracy*, but is the tyranny of a section only of the proletariat, explained and perhaps

justified by the local conditions of the Russian people, but is not true Socialism, and is not possible in Western nations where democracy is established. "Democracy and Dictatorship are irreconcilable," he says, "and the whole proletariat of the world is attached to the principle of general democracy." Lenin's dictatorship is not democratic—and "Socialism without democracy is unthinkable."

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Karl Kautsky is ready to hail the ascendancy of Society by the proletariat and their control of the State, if it be secured by democracy and not by dictatorship. The Russian Revolution "has for the first time in the history of the world made a Socialist Party the rulers of a great Empire." "No wonder that the proletarians of all countries have hailed Bolshevism. The reality of proletarian rule weighs heavier in the scale than theoretical considerations." But the error of Bolsheviks is in obtaining rule by the wrong methods—by imposing a dictatorship which denies liberty to all, defies other proletarians, and does not include peasants. To assume that these dictatorial methods are applicable to Western nations is the defiance of democracy and is false Marxism. Marx always thought it possible that in England and America "the proletariat might peacefully conquer political power." "Confining the outlook to trade interests narrows the mind, and this is one of the drawbacks to mere Trade Unionism." "Democracy signifies rule of majority, but not less the protection

of minorities.' Kautsky's book forms a manifesto of rational Socialism—which is this. The methods of the Soviets in Russia are wrong : their ultimate purpose is right. It is the control of the State by the manual labourers of the cities, but not including those who till the soil.

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There is such a flux of occasional poetry in cryptograms—which looks very like poetry, but is often in harsh discords and hard to understand—that it is refreshing to come upon verses which have the true ring of melodious phrase and clear graceful thought. I notice in the *Spectator* of January 10th four stanzas, signed Evelyn Grant-Duff, which seem to me to be the genuine thing :—

TO A KINGFISHER.

A splash, a dart, a gleam of blue,
A spray of jewels rainbow hue,
Between the rushes gray and bare,
Sweet little sapphire of the air.

Thou flashest 'gainst the Western sky
Where the once lovely colours die,
Their sunset death and eerie mist
Hangs o'er the waters thou hast kissed.

Would that our young bards would give us some more like that.

* * * * *

I was one of the very first to honour the genius of Thomas Hardy. I have indeed long studied his

philosophic insight almost more than his romances or his poems. In both there is the substratum and undertone of a serious thinker on human life—albeit of the dismal school of Lucretius. Long since recognised as the accepted doyen in the art of romance, Thomas Hardy has always seemed to me to have a high poetic imagination that no one since Browning has shown. *The Dynasts* present a Miltonic world-drama—such as rises far beyond the reach of Tennyson, Swinburne, or any contemporary poet. For years past we Hardyites have seen in the reviews, magazines, and journals short poems that could be instantly recognised as his without any signature at all. With all his range of subject, from the world around and Nature before us, the conception and the tone were always his own, like no other man's. It was therefore with peculiar interest that I took up the new volume of *Lyrics* (Macmillan and Co., 1919).

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It is an amazing evidence of fertility, even in mass and variety of subject. This first volume of *Collected Poems* has 521 pages, and about the same number of separate poems. They range over more than fifty years. The scene is mostly Wessex, of which every hill and dale, every moor and down, village and farm, church and graveyard (especially the graveyards), inspire thoughts. What Lakeland was to Wordsworth, that, as we all know, Wessex is to Thomas Hardy. If the field of vision is limited to two or three counties in South-West England, the immediate subject is of

almost infinite variety—from the vault of heaven and ideal space to the smallest flower, bird, tree, or pond, the humblest byre, sheepfold, doorstep, or head-stone. We, who have looked out for these occasional lyrics in magazines, knew how, as Wordsworth says, the meanest flower that blows touches the poet's heart. Burns, Wordsworth, Tennyson, saw unutterable meaning in the simplest things. So too, in a rare sense, does Thomas Hardy. This volume is one long hymn to the poetry seen by him in his native home.

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It is not on the poetic beauty of these lyrics that I wish to dwell; nor shall my reverence for the poet's genius and my love for an old friend prevent me from speaking my whole mind. We saw that these lyrics were always pitched in a very minor key. Sorrow, regret, disappointment, pessimism, despair, the grave, the dead, ghosts and the after-world, was the burden of all. And these were broken only by wild tales of revenge, murder, treachery, gibbet, and jail—fierce love, savage penalty, and brutal crimes of rude peasants. These lyrics were gloomy—but full of power and tragic poetry. They took high place beside Shelley's *Cenci* and *Stanzas in Dejection*, or Tennyson's *The Sisters* and his *Rizpah*. Yes! but in these 500 lyrics of Thomas Hardy there is almost nothing else. This is too much. Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, Tennyson, could be weird and sad enough at times, but the world and man had other meanings for them, and they often revelled in nature, with hope, and joy

and love. But in this mass of lyrical effusion, Nature is a graveyard ; man is a hopeless mystery ; love works out tragedies ; Death ends all—but it leaves ghastly wraiths on earth.

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One heading might serve as title for nearly every poem in this collection. It is *Memento Mori*. He says :—

TO LIFE.

O Life with the sad seared face,
I weary of seeing thee.

I know what thou would'st tell
Of Death, Time, Destiny.

(p. 107.)

This is the idea, the refrain, of the whole series. The Earth is—“the torn troubled form I know as thine.” There are bridals—but Nature cares not if they turn out well or ill. One wedding ends in a fire and leaves the bridegroom “a charred bone.” The lover goes to wed his bride. He is met on his way by her phantom, *i.e.*, his ideal image of her ; when he reaches her house he finds her “pinched and thin”—she is the real woman of fact, of flesh and blood, the other was only his fancy. So the poet said to Love—“depart thou, Love”—“thou hast features pitiless, and iron daggers of distress.” Love replies that his departure would end Man’s race. “So let it be, *Mankind shall cease.*” Well! but this is a veritable “Dance of Death.” As in the famous monkish myths, pictures,

or tombs, Death is supreme Lord. The rich, the powerful, the beautiful, the happy, the joyous, the bride, the mother, the lover, the illustrious, the lowly, all have the grim Skeleton beside them. So medieval mystics saw human life. So Thomas Hardy seems (in poetry) to see it.

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This is not Byron's pose, nor the moaning of Shelley and Keats. Byron, Shelley, Keats, were all exiles from home, decried, destined to early death abroad. And yet their pessimism was occasional. But Thomas Hardy has everything that man can wish —long and easy life, perfect domestic happiness, warm friends, the highest honour his Sovereign can give, the pride of a wide countryside. We know him as a warm friend, a gracious host, rich with every kind of public and private virtue. To me at least, he never looked so mournful as in the photograph in this volume; nor did I ever hear from his lips the weird wail of these verses. There is no affectation in them. They are his own inmost thoughts—his philosophy of life. This monotony of gloom, with all its poetry, is not human, not social, not true.

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Such plain speaking pains me, and I must justify it. His song to Annabel is—"leave her to her fate, Till the Last Trump, farewell." "I look into my glass And view my wasting skin, And say: Would God it came to pass, My heart had shrunk as thin!"

He meets Despair and says, that black and lean

may be earth, yet the heavens are bright. No! cries the Thing—it is night above too! *Jubilate* is a poem of the dead in a churchyard coming up out of their graves to dance and sing. Christmas Eve brings up a buried soldier to ask why is it called “*Anno Domini*”? When the Earth is at last extinct and become “a corpse,” the Lord will repent having “made Earth, and life, and Man.” In a churchyard, the dead “mixed to human jam,” complain of the new parson levelling the sward and moving their memorial stones. The curate secures that an old pauper going to the workhouse shall not be separated from his wife. Why! to be separated, he says, is the one thing that reconciles me to the House! Roses from the Riviera in winter are pleasant—but, poor things, they will rot in our cold land.

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The poor birds, too, have the same fate waiting them as man and flowers have. Shelley’s *Skylark* may thrill us with rapture. But near Leghorn it is fallen to earth—“a pinch of unseen, unguarded dust: a little ball of feather and bone.” The bullfinches sing from dawn till evening, but they do not know of—“All things making for Death’s taking!” So, too, the dear little robin is a happy bird in a shining sky—but in heavy snow, says he, “I turn to a cold stiff feathery ball.” The titles of the lyrics suggest the same tale. “*Revulsion*,” “*Her Death and After*,” “*Friends Beyond*,” “*The Souls of the Slain*,” “*Doom and She*,” “*God-forgotten*,” “*By the*

Earth's Corpse," "The Levelled Churchyard," "In Tenebris, I., II., III.," "I have lived with Shades," "Bereft," "The Flirt's Tragedy," "The Dead Man Walking," "He abjures Love," "The Dead Quire," "The Vampirine Fair," "After the Last Breath," "Before Life and After," "The Unborn" are warned not to be born, "The Ghost of the Past," "God's Funeral," "Ah! are you digging on my grave?" "The Obliterate Tomb," "The Choir-master's Burial," "For Life I had never cared greatly," "The coming of the end."

At the coronation of King George V. the buried kings and queens below ask what the noise and disturbance mean. At his funeral King Edward VII. soliloquises that perhaps if he were to live again he would rather be a plain man. *Vanitas Vanitatum*. It is not so much—*Mors janua Vitae*, as it is rather—*Vita janua Mortis*. And the Portal opens to the Nether-world, not to any world above.

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We do not shrink from the poetry of sorrow—but we want something else. The *Inferno* should lead up to *Paradiso*. But in these 500 poems there is little happiness, joy, or hope—save the mirth in some soldiers' songs and fair-time jaunts. I say nothing of the form, which is always vigorous, rare, and of unique quality. Only I regret that, like Meredith, Hardy follows the bad example of Browning, who would deliberately fashion verses of harsh discord. Here are many poems without a trace of melody.

And there are pieces in this volume which are painful to see; too gruesome, even cynical. "Time's Laughingstocks" has some cruel pieces—"A Sunday Morning Tragedy" and others, such as "The Ruined Maid"; the fifteen "Satires," pp. 391-398; "Her Death and After." But, certainly, "Panthera" is a myth with a Satanic grin which should never be unearthed to-day.

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My philosophy of life is more cheerful and hopeful than that of these *Lyrics*—but they do not at all diminish my entire admiration for *The Dynasts* and for the *Romances*. Truth to say, I believe in Thomas Hardy as a great writer of prose—both in substance and in form—more than of verse. In romances at any rate, though we see the Lucretian undertone in them all, the scene is above ground; the actors are all living and are often happy and prosperous. These delightful stories of his—of real life—are, and must be, men and women—lovers—husbands and wives, in a living world. And real life is not fated to end in nothingness.

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I take a lively interest in the new translation of the grand medieval Epic—*Chanson de Roland*. Captain C. Scott-Moncrieff has now turned these 4,000 lines into very literal, slightly archaic, English, in the original assonance measure (*The Song of Roland*, Chapman and Hall, 1919). It is a bold and successful

venture. Both the poem itself and the new version raise special problems. The date, locality, and authorship of the famous Song of Roland are somewhat uncertain. Its rude, and at times its barbaric, ferocity is not quite congenial to modern taste in poetry, satiated with *Idylls of the King*. Then, assonance is alien to English rhythm—perhaps impossible to acclimatise with our double-knotted and crashing consonants. The questions are: Can these fierce shouts of bloodshed, massacre, and torture be made pleasant to those who enjoy the poetry of to-day? Can the crude assonance of 4,000 lines—without rhythm or melody—be made tolerable to English ears?

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Captain Scott-Moncrieff has solved both problems. The "Roland" is the best preserved of the early medieval epics. It certainly belongs to the end of the eleventh century, just before the first Crusade, and it presents us with a living picture of that fierce time of battle and fanatical Christendom. Its joy in carnage and every horror of the battlefield, its passion for knightly honour, reckless chivalry, feudal loyalty and justice, its deadly race against the Infidel and the Saracen, its blind devotion to Church, ritual, and priests, are only relieved by occasional gleams of friendship, womanhood, and Nature. But its intensity, vitality, and strength make it a great poem, less horrible than the *Niebelungen*, and less fantastic than the Arthurian legends. The poet believed it all to be

true, and he exults in every act of his heroes. Cleaving an enemy from the skull to the chine is every-day's work. Tearing a traitor limb from limb by wild horses is feudal law. Massacring a hundred thousand Paynims is God's service. An Archbishop is one of the foremost Paladins. All this the Normans who conquered kingdoms in the eleventh century held to be true chivalry and pure religion.

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This monotony of slaughter and fanaticism reads rather thin in prose, whether English or French. To transform it into rhymed couplets would destroy its grand simplicity, much as Pope's couplets destroy the *Iliad*. To modernise it into Tennysonian blank verse would take the sting out of the lines. It has to be in verse—then, in what verse? Captain Scott-Moncrieff takes the ten syllable heroic line of Shakespeare and Milton—but neither in blank verse nor in rhyme. He follows the original which is in assonance. That is, the *vowel sounds* rhyme, but not the consonants—“rage” and “shame” are good assonance; so are “chiefs” and “seat.” The same *sound* in vowel, but not in consonant, endings has to be kept up all through the “*laisse*,” or stanza—which may run from ten to fifty lines. The effect of this assonance in English is faintly perceptible, unless it runs into true rhyme; but it gives an impression that it is not blank verse, and the sense is not carried on by involution of the verses. The result is a quaint sense of archaism which has not the fine melody of rhymed

verse, nor the measured dignity of blank verse, nor yet the baldness of plain prose.

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Next, the English used is slightly archaic, or rather of the primitive ballad form—like a child's tale. Thus, the effect of the unusual assonance, coupled with the antiquated form, produces an impression of sustained old-world chant, intended solely to be heard, not to be read. This is essential to the spirit of the poem—which never was anything but a *Chanson*—a ballad for the voice—not the eye. No prose can give the ring of the verse—with its sense of speed and fury, and of almost delirious passion which believes any extravagance. Again, no regular modern verse can picture the blood-lust and savagery which were held to be heroism and piety eight centuries ago. To my ear, the strange assonance-rhyme along with the old-English phrasing come nearer to the original than either prose or verse could attain. So I take the experiment to be a success; and I advise all who care for medieval history and for primitive epics to study the original side by side with Captain Scott-Moncrieff's translation.

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As a specimen (at once of success and failure) I quote the lines of the last prayer and death of Roland (CLXXVI—2334-2396) :—

“ Very Father, in Whom no falsehood is,
 Saint Lazaron from death Thou did'st remit,
 And Dan-iel save from the lion's pit;
 My soul in me preserve from all perils
 And from the sins I did in life commit ! ”
 His right-hand glove, to God he offers it
 Saint Gabriel from's hand hath taken it.
 Over his arm his head bows down and slips,
 He joins his hands : and so is life finish'd.
 God sent him down His angel cherubin
 And Saint Mich-ael we worship in peril;
 And by their side Saint Gabriel alit;
 So the Count's soul they bare to Paradis.

Now I have before me three versions in modern French prose—of F. Genin, 1850 ; of Alex de Saint-Albin, 1865 ; and of Léon Gautier, 1894. And I am clear that the new verse translation is quite as accurate as these, and gives a far truer sense of the rude lilt of the old *Chanson*.

Needless to say that much of this might be improved. It is obviously a first attempt and Captain Scott-Moncrieff talks of a new edition of his work. In the first place he must base his text on that of Léon Gautier, *édition classique*, with all its Notes and Glossary. Then let us beg him to print the original text on the same page, or, better, on the opposite page of the translation. I am not going to criticise details ; but there are two words, the translation of which seems to me quite inexplicable. Why is *li* (of course *le* from *ille*) always translated “ that ” instead of “ the ”? *That* Emperor, *that* Count, *that* King become tiresome. Again, why is *chevaucher* always “ canter,” instead of “ ride,” “ gallop ” or “ trot ”?

Even in a charge of twenty thousand knights, they stick to the ladies' pace, and never break into a gallop.

That Emperor he canters on with rage— (1812)
Canter therefore! Vengeance upon them do! (2426)

The idea of Charles at the head of 100,000 knights “cantering,” of the massed chivalry of France charging with a Hyde Park canter on the Paynim is too much to bear.

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Assonance suits the wild primitive swing of the ancient Chant. But let assonance never be introduced into English verse. It is utterly inapplicable to our tongue, which multiplies and sounds its final consonants—whilst in French these consonants are mute.

Quant Rollant veit que bataille serat, (1110)
Plus se fait fiers que leun ne leuparz— (1111)

Pronounced in French this couplet makes a fair rhyme.

When Rollant sees that now must be combat,
More fierce he's found than lion or leopard—

This couplet in English does not rhyme at all.

MARCH

— 1920 —

III

WITH bankruptcy, war, and revolution hanging over Europe, the immediate need is an official declaration by Britain that we do not now exact the full measure of the Treaty—so-called of Peace. It is, as I said last month, “impossible, ruinous, suicidal.” When I so described it I had not seen Mr. Keynes’ book on its *Economic Consequences* (Macmillan, 14th thousand, 1920). The world had already condemned the Treaty as an elaborate scheme to crush Germany and Austria for a whole generation, to which the fierce passion of the French Minister and the Mosaic judgment of the American President had made us a party. Wilson and Clemenceau are gone; and the dominant part which Wilson held when he came to Europe in 1918 has now passed to Britain. France and Italy may struggle to get the vast sums and the rich lands they claim from Germany and Austria. But we can, and we must, revise the Treaty—or chaos waits for us, at home and abroad. No doubt the British Government cannot now withdraw from the *Entente*. Any formal alteration of the Treaty must be made by the League of Nations.

But Britain should at once make it clear how far it will assist in crushing Germany and paralysing Europe.

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Mr. Keynes' book has now been published many months, and no sort of official reply to it has been issued. Nothing but the angry cries of bureaucrats has been heard. No such crushing indictment of a great act of international policy, no such revelation of the futility of diplomats has ever been made. In the teeth of its masterly analysis the literal execution of the Treaty is out of the question, for it would strangle our own industrial revival. The Prime Minister said at first—whatever he said afterwards—that we "*were not going to wreck our own industries.*" We are doing it now. Whatever public men, in or out of office, may have talked about penalties, indemnities, and reparation, whatever exultant millions expected in their triumph, we must all face the facts that these promises and hopes cannot be fulfilled; and to talk more about them is to starve Europe and ruin ourselves. It is one of the canons of an unlimited democracy: *populus vult decipi—et decipiatur.* If Aristides will not humour their passions, he must retire into exile.

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I have carefully studied Mr. Keynes' book, and I entirely agree with his main conclusions. So far as it is a personal criticism of ministers and a political

pamphlet, I say nothing ; nor do I pretend to judge the details of his economic estimates and his proposed "remedies." Whatever may be his miscalculations or his indiscretions, he has made out an overwhelming case against the Treaty as it stands—on its economic side and the scale of its reparations. We are not likely to agree to Mr. Keynes' doctrine that the Germans can bind us to the exact language of Mr. Wilson's various addresses, speeches and letters ; the words of which not ten men in Europe or in America had in mind on November 11th, 1918, when the German delegates accepted Foch's terms. They knew they were exhausted and might be utterly destroyed. To talk about Wilson's orations in New York as interpreting the Treaty is mere debating verbiage.

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The main points on which the Treaty is unworkable are these : (1) The annihilation of the German mercantile marine is extravagant, if German trade is to exist at all. Unless it does, no payments can be made. (2) To exclude Germany from all overseas possessions and to confiscate all property of Germans therein is a further destruction of German trade. (3) The expropriation of German private property is a vindictive and immoral provision ; and when it is extended to non-German lands, and even to those of neutrals, the whole scheme is ludicrous by its impossibility, as well as infamous in its spite. The complicated attempt to make Germany an outlaw in international trade—

economically outside the pale of civilised nations—is little more than a grim joke.

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As to the provisos about coal and metal, whilst the savage destruction of mines by the defeated Germans must be repaired, this ought not to be carried out with a violence which would stifle German industries. And the prolonged occupation of purely German lands, especially those lying far to the East, will be a continuous source of unrest to Germany and of risk to the Allies. And the same holds good of the railway and river transport in German territories. Again, the embargo on the union of German Austria with the Empire is wanton blindness. In the first place, the union is inevitable, and, in the next place, without such union Vienna is a starving derelict. Writing whilst everything is still in the making, and the League without U.S.A. in suspended animation, waiting for "artificial respiration," I shall say nothing now about territorial rearrangements. Many of them are quite questionable, and will have to be modified. Poland is a desperate *crux*.

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The strength of Mr. Keynes' book, and the key to the problems of Europe, lie in the scheme of reparation, as designed in the Treaty. Its literal exaction would deprive the populations of Europe, including our own, of the means of livelihood. I make no attempt to explain, or to criticise, the figures given by

Mr. Keynes, who is a consummate economic and financial authority. The world knows that, after detailed examination, he puts as a total recoverable from Germany in a course of years a sum not more than two thousand millions of pounds in one form or other. Perhaps, if he were writing to-day instead of last autumn, he would not put it higher than one thousand million, and that without interest over a long period. For my part, I should be glad to hope that the Allies together may receive even that reduced sum.

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It may be asked—how came such an extravagant scheme to be made by the Heads of the Great Powers, and accepted by the democracies of Britain, America, and France? The answer is that it was done in secret sessions ; the real meanings were falsified ; and when the Gargantuan Treaty of June 28th, 1919, was at last published, none but professional publicists ever read it through, and none but professional economists could understand its subtle effects. The thing was a case of *cephalitis turgida*—“ Swelled head.” Wilson caught the disease from Wilhelm ; and he improved on it, with the American way of going ten times better than anyone else. He infected France ; and then British good sense succumbed. And in the hullabaloo of the Peace celebrations real facts and imminent dangers were hidden away and overlooked. We were hoodwinked. I know that I was.

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I shall not attempt to criticise the “remedies” proposed by Mr. Keynes, nor do I venture to propose any others. The burning question of the hour is rather by what power, and under what authority, can any remedies be effected. As the Treaty and the Covenant stand, the only lawful way of modifying the Treaty is by revision by the League of Nations. The Niagara Treaty was signed by twenty-eight States. It consists of 440 Articles, and occupied eighty-four columns of close print in the *Times*. The League of Nations is the Court of Appeal. What is the League of Nations doing now? And if it be in active session, what chance is there of any decision being taken when, by the constitution, all decisions must be unanimous? Is it conceivable that France or Italy will release their claims and forgo the awards on which they built such hopes? And must we be bound by *their* claims and *their* hopes? I trust not.

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Even if the fatal *Liberum Veto* did not exist, when is the League going to act in force? But the dangers, the famine, the bankruptcy are urgent. Something must be done at once. As immediate and official revision by the League is out of the question—as indeed the Treaty at the moment is almost a scrap of paper again—action is left for Britain, the only Power whose head is beginning to shrink to normal proportions. We can, and we must, by any such diplomatic camouflage as will serve, make it understood by Germany that at least by us the penal

articles of reparation will now be partly relaxed—and at any rate will be postponed. U.S.A., which is out of the game, “retired hurt,” will not complain. Nor will Japan, which has cynically watched the suicide of Europe. If France insists on full payment, if Italy desires both sides of the Adriatic and part of Asia Minor, they must take their own course. Britain is not bound to help them to ruin civilisation, whilst the author and potential President of the Covenant is “not taking any.”

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I turn to another book on the Treaty and the League—*Europe and the League of Nations*, by Charles Sarolea (G. Bell and Sons, 1919)—a masterly criticism of the Versailles settlement by one who is a firm believer in the idea of the Covenant, but has made a thorough study of all the difficulties and dangers it presents. Mr. Sarolea, by birth a Belgian, long settled in Britain, and now Professor in the University of Edinburgh, is one of the best living authorities in the languages, history, and diplomacy of the European Powers. His book serves as a counterpart and supplement to that of Mr. Keynes, for it deals largely with the territorial and national problems of the settlement, as Mr. Keynes deals with the economic and reparation problems. The two books together make an unanswerable case for the immediate revision of the Treaty and for the consolidation of the visionary League of Nations into a practical international Union.

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Mr. Sarolea begins by grasping the enormous problems presented by the dissolution of four great Empires that extend from the Rhine to the Pacific. I hope he overstates the case in saying—"it will take fifty years to organise the new Europe." Certainly it was not done in six months at Versailles. The only remedy against chaos and famine, he says, is international co-operation; but Mr. Sarolea rather undervalues true patriotism—which should be neither aggressive nor exclusive. He stoutly defends the claim of the smaller nations to an equal voice in the League on the principle of the American Senate's equality of votes. The most valuable part of his criticism is the discussion of the "Obstacles to the League": (1) military—that of disarmament by land and by sea; (2) political—the conflict of external and internal disputes between races and religions; (3) domestic—the adjustment of delegacies to the League with the changing representatives of nations at home; (4) then come in difficulties economic, of the League, or of separate nations; (5) that of the biologic growth of peoples within their own borders; (6) that of race and of language, of national sentiment, of religion, of intellectual culture; (7) of organisation within the League; and, finally, of its executive power, *i.e.*, of the *sanction* to compel submission to its decisions. He truly says: "A weak League of Nations would be far more dangerous than no League of Nations." As things are, he sees that the League is rudimentary; but he has faith that all these obstacles can be overcome.



Would that our able Labour leaders and the vast organisations they control would take to heart all that Mr. Sarolea writes in his Chapter VII. on "Democracy in Foreign Policy." He shows how the settlement of Versailles was a compromise made under conflicting party cries at home. "The Congress of Versailles mainly reflected the mind of the mob, whilst the Congress of Vienna (1814) reflected the sober reason of a few responsible statesmen." By the "mob mind" he means, first, the mind of the war party, and next, "the mob mind systematically worked by a sensational Press and secretly acted upon by private financial interests." "Modern democracies have been more generally aggressive than pacifist." And he insists on a really essential axiom when he writes that "under modern conditions a body of expert specialist diplomats is even more necessary than under the old conditions." "Amateur diplomacy by party politicians" is a source of danger and confusion. The popular cry for all open diplomacy in the eyes of the people is as preposterous as to ask that bankers and traders should make all business deals in open exchange. The ultimate assent of the nation to any liability imposed on it is a totally different thing from the public discussion of its conditions.

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One of the most valuable chapters in this book is that on the "Future of Poland." He shows how the policy of the Allies has varied thrice. At the outset there were Polish armies in every one of the three

great armies—shooting down each other. At first the Allies used Poland against Prussia and Austria. When Russia entered Galicia the cause of the Poles was forgotten and suppressed. At the end of the war, with Russia out of it, the Allies took up the cause again, and even worked to make Poland a barrier to separate Germany from Russia. Truly tragic is the state of Poland, as Mr. Sarolea with first-hand knowledge describes it as “the most vulnerable of the new States.” It has no real frontier: an open plain, an historic battlefield. It has neither true limits nor centre, is surrounded by its secular enemies, with no homogeneous race, and with five millions of Jews whom it cannot assimilate, of German and Russian origins. Divided in races, religions, industry, classes, and by tradition, Poland is at the mercy of its mighty neighbours. Its one hope lies in the League of Nations, which as yet is itself little more than a hope.

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It is an axiom of politics that as between nations the sentiment of gratitude has no place. To-day we might rather say that *ingratitude* is the natural and normal rule. We are told that our country is now the object of universal ill-will and depreciation among our Allies and friendly neutrals. This is utterly unreasonable, but it seems to be human nature. There is not one Power which we have injured—nor even one that we have not helped and treated with singular amity. That France should turn round on us and talk of breaking up the *Entente* would be monstrous. If in

August, 1914, we had not rushed in to save her, France would be now reduced to the level of Spain—if not of another Poland. Where is our offence? Simply that we refuse to be dragged by France to decimate and crush Germany and to second all her claims to some Mediterranean coasts. Poland is sore that we cannot guarantee her the extensions she demands. Roumania, Italy, Serbia, Greece, Syria, Arabia—all make impracticable claims and charge us with deserting them. Because the nations are bitter to find their extravagant hopes unrealised, they turn round upon the Power which for the time is the least stricken and seems the strongest.

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We have gained nothing ourselves to the detriment of any one of these nations. On the contrary, we have done all we can to help them in men, arms, and money. Our sole offence is that we will not—because we cannot—do more; and we refuse to follow them in aggressive and impossible adventures. Italy calls on us to curb the Serbs and the Greeks. Serbs and Greeks call on us to resist the aggression of Italy. Under the impulse of Wilson—the Old Man of the Sea striding on the Covenant—no doubt we promised more than we can perform. Things change—Governments change—and what is possible one month is impossible the next. In all our long history there never was a time when the Governments of Britain were faced with such a sea of dilemmas. At home and abroad they are beset with cries to embark on policies

which are contradictory, impossible, would mean new losses, further debt, even more wars—whilst the whole world is heaving as if it were waiting for an earthquake. Give us all we ask—cry foreign nations! Do this—and do not do that!—is the babel of party cries at home. The confusion abroad and at home makes any action impossible—even if Heaven sent an arch-angel to be our Minister.

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Of all the attacks on us, the most unreasonable are those of the baser party Press in America. Of what can the Republic complain? When war broke out it stood officially (not too benevolently) neutral, grumbling about maritime rights recognised by nations for centuries and practised of late by U.S.A. We accepted the lead of their President when he came over, as if he were President of the United States of Europe. We joined in with his tremendous schemes for re-organising the world. Was it for us to ask him to prove that he represented his nation? What would have happened if we had said—Bring over senators of both parties, or we cannot recognise you as representing your country? To make our Irish trouble an American injury is an outrageous defiance of national independence. What if we treated as a British injury the oppression of their coloured citizens and our Japanese allies, or of all who choose to drink alcohol. The Irish problem is a struggle between two races and two religions, not in Britain, but in Ireland—as much a domestic question as that between Democrats and Republicans in the States.

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A new translation in verse of Lucretius which has just reached me—*Lucretius on the Nature of Things*, by Sir Robert Allison (Arthur L. Humphreys, 1919)—turned my thoughts again to the great Roman poet, who in the lurid times of the old Republic meditated on the World and on Man. It is a book to study in our not quite dissimilar days. And I at once re-read Morley's stirring chapter in his *Recollections*, Vol. II., pp. 118-130, which he calls “An Easter Digression”: a disquisition on the Lucretian theory of Life and Death. After some telling passages from ancient and modern writers, he “revives his memories of Lucretius”; and a fascinating study in criticism it is. He begins by quoting various estimates and translations of the poet, and what has been said of him by Dryden, Polignac, Voltaire, Lamartine, Macaulay, Mommsen, Goethe; and then Morley gives us his own idea of the *Pessimism* of Lucretius—warmly praising the brilliant Chapter IV., which J. W. Mackail devotes to this poet in that most masterly of all handbooks—his *Latin Literature*.

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Sir Robert Allison, of Trinity College, Cambridge, already known by his translations of Plautus and of Cicero, has now put the 7,400 lines of Lucretius' six books into close and literal blank verse, nearly keeping line for line. It is impossible to render Latin hexameters into English pentameters in quite the same space—above all, such closely-knit verse as that of Lucretius—without at times sacrificing an epithet.

But this is far better than Dryden's way of adding needless words. So the English reader, who finds Munro's exact prose version of these mighty metaphysics rather too stiff and lugubrious, may read the entire poem in Sir Robert Allison's accurate, easy, and sonorous lines. He adds to the charm of Lucretius by constant quotations in foot-notes of parallel passages from modern poets—Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Gray, Byron, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne—several of these being evident reminiscences of the Latin lines.

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I cite a few lines of Sir Robert's version of some famous phrases that everyone knows :—

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum. I. 101.
To such dread deeds did superstition lead—

Humana ante oculos foede cum vita jaceret
In terris oppressa gravi sub religione
Quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat
Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans,
Primum Graius homo mortales tollere contra
Est oculos ausus primusque obsistere contra. I. 62-67.

When human life lay grovelling on the ground,
A piteous sight, by superstition crushed,
Who lifting high her head from heaven, looked down
With lowering look, then first a man of Greece
Dared lift his eyes, and dared to face the foe.

Augescunt aliae gentes, aliae minuuntur
Inque brevi spatio mutantur saecula animantium
Et quasi cursores vitai lampada tradunt. II. 77-79.

Some nations wax and others wane, and soon
The races of mankind are changed, and each
In turn to other hands the torch of life,
As runners do.

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I welcome a second and revised edition of Mr. F. S. Marvin's *Century of Hope* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1920). It is a worthy continuation of *The Living Past*, now in its fourth impression, at the same press. The former book was a sketch of Western Progress down to 1815. The new volume is a manual of the growth of political, social, scientific, and artistic humanity from Waterloo to the Great War (1815-1914). It is, of course, only a summary of the leading ideas in thought, and of the decisive events which made the unity of the West and the progress of a common civilisation. It deals with Nationality and Imperialism, with Socialism, Internationalism, Evolution, Education, and Religion, in the same spirit of judicial sanity, sound learning, and synthetic imagination, which make the former book a trustworthy manual for the teacher. And though written by an ardent patriot in the midst of war, it is perfectly just to Teutonic energy and genius.

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The *Century of Hope* is a standing rebuke to the shallow jesters who cast stones at Victorians—at the work of their own fathers and grandfathers—as if the nineteenth century was an age of conventional formulas and contented torpor. On the contrary, it was an epoch of concentrated effort to expand the life of civilisation in new achievement. It did not think this could be realised in an intellectual and moral *go-as-you-like*; nor did it hail a millennium in anything which looked new and surprising. But, as Mr. Marvin

shows, the age from 1815 to 1914 was inspired by optimism—at once sane and instructed. Pessimism and optimism are labels flung about by the frivolous or the ignorant. To be obsessed either by gloom or by hope, without knowledge of facts, is equally wrong. Humanity is ever encircled with tremendous difficulties : it is endowed with incalculable powers of recuperation. The ignorant do not see the dangers ; the poor-hearted do not feel the hope. The wise man is often full of anxiety for the immediate future : he never loses faith in ultimate victory. He is always at once pessimist and optimist ; for he never underrates the practical difficulties which obstruct the path of progress. But all the time he knows that progress must in the end prevail. And in the darkest hour he awaits the certain Dawn of Light.

APRIL

— 1920 —

IV

THE great Conference of Powers, on which the hopes of civilisation rest and for which infernal chaos yawns, is fast becoming a matter of comic opera, pantomime, and romance. The firm of Spenlow, Jorkins, and others, are at their old game. Mr. Spenlow is in Court—but he can be sent for : he bobs about between Court and the office. He has a partner —Mr. Jorkins, “ who keeps himself in the background.” Mr. Jorkins is not seen, “ he cannot be seen at present.” But nothing can be done in business without his approval. “ Mr. Jorkins is immovable.” Mr. Jorkins will not listen to this. Mr. Jorkins “ will have his bond.” He does not come down into the office to discuss things with his partners. However “ painful to their feelings,” the partners dare not act without him. He is really “ a mild man of a heavy temperament”—but he is “ the most obdurate of men.” That is why business drags on in the firm of Spenlow and Jorkins. Alas ! There is no comedy at all. It is the Tragedy of Nations, in the twentieth-century crisis of the civilisation of the world. Famine, massacre, more war—all are around and upon us. Everything is adjourned till the Powers can agree.

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The imminent danger is that the League of Nations may become a potential source of international animosity and disputes. So far from being a means of restoring harmony, it is rapidly breeding new grounds of division. The twentieth-century Gospel of Peace is passing into a game of grab. Europe was not altogether peaceful before 1914; but two great Alliances and Ententes held the great Powers in some common policies. America was thriving more than ever and kept aloof. Asia and Africa had local troubles, but nothing revolutionary. In 1920 it is all changed. The League of Nations has stirred a cosmopolitan eruption, far more than Rousseau's *Contrat Social* stirred up European revolution. For a generation the Powers have never been so bitter, so jealous, so suspicious, so keen to seize all they can, so prone to resent each others' acts, so obstinate in refusing agreement. This is true of all. The United States are torn asunder by the Covenant. They made war and still do not make peace.

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I have always been—and I am still—an ardent believer in the great destiny and the grand example of the Republic. When I came back from my unfor-gotten intercourse with its patriotic citizens now twenty years ago, I published in my *Memoirs* my deep conviction that they hold “the crucial pivots on which the future of humanity will turn, so that the van of human progress will ultimately point toward the West.” I think so still: I have never doubted

it. The idea of a confederation of Nations is one that I have myself preached all my life. When Mr. Wilson formulated it with such eloquence and moral fervour, I was ready to welcome the Utopian scheme as an ideal; though I said the nations were not ripe for it unless the spiritual exaltation during the war had given them new souls and had cast out the devils of national greed, jealousy, and hate. As to the Adriatic and Eastern problems, I think Mr. Wilson was right, and I wish the other Powers had accepted his lead. On the other hand, the reservations of the Senate seem to me inevitable, just, and necessary; and I trust that the League will be modified in accordance with them. But the paralysis of Europe, and the advance on it of famine and confusion, are too heavy a price to pay even for a more reasonable form of peace.

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An idle discussion seems to be arising as to whether Labour "can form a Government"; and this can only be settled by the old rule: *solvitur ambulando*. Surely no one who watches the debates in Parliament and in the recent Trades Union Congress can doubt that such men as now fill the Labour benches, and many more such men as are quite ready and very likely to join them, can form a Ministry fully competent to carry the House with them and to hold their own in debate. Many an independent observer would be glad to see such men as Mr. Clynes, Mr. J. H. Thomas, Mr. Adamson, released from perpetual criti-

cism and placed with all the responsibility of power. But this is only the House of Commons' point of view, which now is but part, perhaps not the principal part, of the vast new problem of Government. The war and the world-revolution that followed have changed all things, and especially the tremendous task of administering this amorphous and unexampled Empire. At times the House seems to be a mere Duma with no force behind it at all. All the real forces seem to be seething inside and around the United Kingdom.

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What Mr. Clynes and his able comrades will have to consider is this. How are they going to keep in hand the "extreme men," as they are called, who may be a small minority, but whose passion will seek to realise the dream of "social liquidation," so dear to European revolutionists, yet which the organised and entrenched resources of British Conservatism will not "take lying down," as did the plutocracy of Russia. No one can suspect any Bolshevism in Parliamentary Labour, but there is plenty of it outside; and it is one of the marks of aggressive Democracy to denounce as traitors those leading democrats who achieve place and power. What has become of Kerensky and Prince Lvof? To the question—How will Labour fill the minor and permanent offices of civil and imperial administration which require expert and specially trained servants—a service every day becoming more complicated and more arduous?—it is

usual to reply—Oh! the permanent services will be used. Yes! but will they not be the real masters of policy? Will not the extremists denounce them? Besides, if the extirpation of Capitalism were to succeed, how is the expert training to be got? The whole of our civil, legal, economic, military, and financial administration is born, bred, and trained under Capitalism—can be trained in no other way. Lenin has to get his experts by high pay and terrorism. He has to bribe or drive back to work the able men of the old *régime*, and he dare not trust them. To work the vast and complicated machine of modern society there is needed a lifelong training in administration and the inherited and instinctive resources of capitalist families.

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Writing before the new Irish Bill has been debated, it is impossible to criticise it. As I am half Irish in blood, have been since 1867 a public advocate of Irish Nationalism, and in 1886 was a Gladstonian candidate for Home Rule, I cannot forbear a word about the most crucial problem that has tried British Government in my memory. The new Bill is, to my mind, the most hopeful of any that have preceded it, and in some form I fervently trust it may become law. Still, I cannot understand the drafting which opens the Bill with two Parliaments, to be ultimately, if possible, united in one. I have always maintained that Ireland is one nation, and that the assertion of that fact is the indispensable basis of all Irish policy. The Bill should

have begun with creating a real Parliament for Ireland. Then, as the inevitable pledge to preserve the local claims of the North-East counties, their Parliamentary representatives should form a statutory, irremovable standing Committee empowered to veto any law, order, or liability imposed on their local areas, under very carefully-contrived clauses of reasonable conditions. Those who condemn the Bill—whether they be Unionists, Liberals, Nationalists, or Sinn Feiners—propose no other, even possible, scheme. Their futile negative, or *non possumus*, is rank mischief-making.

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I trust that British patience and coolness will be able to discuss and modify the Bill, apart from our present excitement over the horrible crimes rife in Ireland to-day. Let us remember that the demand of separation is an entirely recent and quite artificial battle-cry, concocted by literary enthusiasts and noisy town-bred talkers. None of Ireland's real public men ever dreamed of it—neither O'Connell, nor Butt, nor Parnell, nor Redmond, nor any Parliamentary or Nationalist Party for generations. It has no real hold on the peasants, for all but the most ignorant know it would be their ruin. It is one of those strident catch-words which suddenly seize the Celtic imagination, as “Prince Charlie” did the Highlanders in 1745, and the “King” did to the Bretons in France in 1793. It is a passing delirium which has no hold on the Irish nation. It may destroy the offered Home Rule.

But, whether it passes or not, this last effort of Britain to restore peace must convince all abroad, even Irishmen in America and the Dominions, that Britain does not oppress Ireland, but offers her real self-government ; and that the difficulties which bar a settlement are wholly caused by antagonism between Irishmen in Ireland ; and that is an ancient quarrel of religion and race, bred by ignorance deeper than any other in the civilised world and fomented by the conspiracy of a treasonable priesthood.

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The crisis on the Turkish problem adds new interest to the history of that land, especially when it comes from a recognised authority. M. Charles Diehl, of the French Institute, Professor in the University of Paris, who has devoted so many years of study to the political and artistic questions of the former Greek Empire seated at Constantinople, has just issued a summary of the history from the first Constantine in 330 A.D. down to the last Constantine XI. in 1453.¹ In some 250 pages he tells us with masterly conciseness this wonderful story of the rise, expansion, decline, and fall of New Rome, over its evolution of 1,128 years, a story hardly inferior in fascination to that of Old Rome in a similar period. With a multiplicity of dates, lists of one hundred Emperors, tables of chronology, bibliography of literature, maps of the City and the Empire at its extension and decline, he gives fifteen photographs of buildings,

¹ *Histoire de l'Empire Byzantin*, Charles Diehl. A Picard, 12mo. 1919.

drawings, mosaics, and portraits. The volume forms a scientific account of the complex civilisation which the Turks under Mahomet the Conqueror overwhelmed exactly 467 years ago.

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The book is an admirable manual for the student or the publicist, as it concentrates in handy form the final judgments of a master in this branch of history. But it is impossible in the limits of space to throw over the story the colour of personal or detailed narrative. The object is to show the ultimate conclusions to be drawn on these manifold problems. And this is done by one whose authority is known in Europe and America. M. Diehl does ample justice to the real continuity of Byzantine civilisation, its glorious history as the maintainer of antique literature, art, and organisation under the barbarous invasions from North or East, as the champion of Christendom for eight centuries, as the missionary and teacher of the Slavonic races, and the source, even in its own ruin, of the European Renascence of learning. He explains the vast expansion of the Empire by Justinian, who ruled the lands round the Mediterranean and the Euxine from Cadiz to the Euphrates and the Arabian deserts. He traces the long story of its gradual decline over nine centuries—the defeat of the Persians and the fateful battles with Arabs and Turks—the bitter strife over image-worship—the civil and military administration—the development of art and literature—the jealous enmity of the Latins and

the Roman Church which led to the breaking up of the Byzantine world and its domination by Islam.

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I take much interest in books about Sappho and in the constant attempts at the hopeless task of translating the fragments which survive. Exactly seventy years ago I told my college tutor—who seemed not to have read them—that “the world has never produced the equal of these odes”; and in 1892 I wrote the *Life of Sappho* for our *Calendar of Great Men*, calling her “the greatest genius who has ever appeared amongst women.” So I welcome a new verse translation of the odes, including the newly-found ode to Anactoria. Dr. Way, who has done so much by his verse translations of Homer and of the Greek dramatists, has now ventured on the impossible in a new and somewhat startling plan.¹ He seeks to present some of Sappho’s thoughts in intelligible sequence, to interest the general reader who may know nothing of the Greek fragments. In this way he knits together lines which he thinks belong to a connected poem, retaining entire the famous Sapphic stanzas, and some others which seem complete as they stand. Thus the “Invocation to Aphrodite” is made up of four fragments. The “Leto and Niobe” is compacted out of fourteen fragments.

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¹ *Sappho and the Vigil of Venus*, translated by Arthur S. Way, D.Litt., Macmillan and Co., 1920.

Dr. Way uses that beautiful little volume of Mr. H. T. Wharton, 2nd ed. (D. Stott, 1887). We find that some six broken and detached lines in the original make no less than twenty lines in Dr. Way's "Lament for Adonis." It is very ingenious. I hesitate to say more. I fear scholars who love these gems of Greek lyricism as they are in their ruin, like bits from the Parthenon marbles, may repeat what Bentley said of Pope's *Homer*. Many of these English verses are graceful. Only they are not Sappho. Now, as J. Addington Symonds so well put it, "her every word has a peculiar and unmistakable perfume." It has the royal hall-mark of inimitable grace. Poets from Catullus down to Swinburne have tried to give us that perfume in their own tongue. Alas! perfume is a thing that will not bear carriage. It evaporates in the act of transport. Diamonds are not to be replaced by paste. A phrase of Sappho's, imbedded in an old grammarian's lucubrations, glows like a diamond on a dark floor.

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But those who "have no use" for Sappho in Greek —are we to say now the great majority of future B.A.'s and M.A.'s?—I advise to try Dr. Way's composite version, because some pathetic and exquisite lines of Sappho in the original seem mere commonplace when transposed into literal English. For instance, the four lines:—

Δέδυκε μὲν ἀ σελάννα—π.τ.λ.

The Moon has set, the Pleiades too, etc.—seventeen words in all—states a simple fact in plain English, but in Greek it has a melody and a poignant thrill of its own. Dr. Way has to use thirty-two words with half a dozen new adjectives and ideas, and then the four words with which it ends :—

Ἐγώ δε μόνα κατεύθω—

have to become ten words :—

“ and I—ah me!—
Lie on my couch alone, alone! ”

There are verse translations of this fragment by J. H. Merivale and J. A. Symonds, but both also expand and seek to decorate the Greek. That simplicity, reticence, reserve in Greek poetry and art make both inimitable. And of all poetry, ancient or modern, that is the secret of Sappho.

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Let me add that Dr. Way, who is always ingenious, is in many poems graceful. Take No. 3 :—

Ἄστερες μὲν ἀμφὶ κάλπῃ σελάννιαν—π.τ.λ.

“ The Stars that round the Queen of Night
Like maids attend her,
Hide as in veils of mist their light
When she, in full-orbed glory bright
O'er all the earth shines from her height
A silver splendour.”

Mr. Wharton quotes versions of this by other poets; but they all use twice the number of words and many superfluous images. Strangely enough, in a parallel line, Tennyson, after Homer, *Iliad* viii. 555, writes:—

“ As when in heaven the stars about the Moon look beautiful— ”

Now, Sappho says that the stars hide their bright light around the full moon. This is more true—and more poetic. The glory of the stars is when the moon is down. When the moon is full the stars pale and cease to show their beauty. Homer is never “ precious,” and Tennyson is never harsh. But Sappho is always at once “ precious ”—in a good sense—and lovely.

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IN the almost unprecedented confusion of the hour (April 15th, 1920)—the Prime Minister at sea—his colleagues hardly less so—the state of Ireland more ghastly than ever, and the new Bill standing over for debate—U.S.A. not able to decide if it has a government or a policy at all—the Supreme Council on tour, now taking *villeggiatura* on the Riviera—in such a state of things, the wise man who takes a detached view of public affairs in a remote retreat will withhold his judgment until better advised. It is for an omniscient Press, writing only twelve hours before it is read at the breakfast table, to tell us what we ought to think about it all. Here, down in Bath, I try to possess my soul in peace with law, philosophy, and books of the day.

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A portentous sign of the New World in which we live is the suddenness with which rooted ideas are abandoned and dominant changes are made. Reforms that have been fought over for generations pass almost by consent. The franchise is doubled; Women have votes and even exceed the male voters; Home Rule is carried by Unionist majorities against

the Liberals ; Labour becomes the New Rich, and the lower Middle Class, whose " fixed incomes " are now " sinking incomes," become the New Poor. Bishops and Deans invite Nonconformists to their cathedrals. The Minister of Education welcomes denominationalism to public schools. The House of Lords leads the way in Divorce. Socialism is advocated in academic, literary, and aristocratic quarters. The biggest Empire on earth is transformed into the millennium of Labour. And the biggest Republic on earth goes " dry " and retires from the world.

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To an old lawyer one of the most amazing changes is the welcome that has been given to the splendid reform of the law of Property introduced by the Lord Chancellor with so much eloquence and learning. It is the greatest and most useful reform in our Law that has been seen for centuries. As an old conveyancer and Professor of Law myself, I recognise the benefits it will confer on the public, if not on the profession as well. In my early days of the law in the 'fifties, I remember Lords Lyndhurst, Campbell, Westbury, Cairns, and Selborne. I was secretary to the Royal Commission of 1869 for Digesting the law ; and for two years I had to register the schemes of famous Judges and draft those of Bethell, who, whatever his other defects, had a real passion to restore order and consistency in the law of Property. In the present Chancellor law reform has found a younger and far more practical enthusiast. In these Notes it

is impossible to discuss a Bill of 250 pages, with its radical abolition of antique anomalies and its judicious assimilation of the law of Inheritance and of Land. As one of the survivors of the law-reformers of two generations, I trust the Bill will pass with due amendments in both Houses. It is one of the best products of the New Time.

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Though the scope of the Bill is so large, and indeed so startling at first sight to the old-fashioned pundit, it will not disturb the holders of important landed estates, nor those holders of other property who take care not to die intestate. The really great changes in the law introduced by the Bill concern devolution on intestacy. Those who have any considerable interest in land for the most part make regular wills, if not elaborate entails. Speaking generally, the Bill will not affect either the laws of Wills or of Entail. To get rid of the antique feudal survivals will remove many a trivial nuisance, but need not concern the general public. But now that so great a body of landed estates are being broken up, and so many small holdings in land are created, it is necessary to provide for intestacy. The assimilation of freeholds to leaseholds is an inevitable result of the immense multiplication of small freeholds, as also is the simplification of the title to land. The Americans who adopted our common law naturally got rid of feudal traditions, and called interests in land and houses *real estate*. The Bill does this for us.

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The new book by the Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge¹ must deeply interest all who reflect on the revolutionary age in which our lot is cast. With great and wide learning and signal detachment of mind, Professor Bury traces the history of the Idea of Progress as the accepted law of the civilisation of mankind. He speaks as a historian, not as apostle of any school, and he gives us an encyclopædic survey of the successive theories by which Progress and Civilisation have grown to be associated in men's minds. He begins his survey with the Greeks—the Athenian poets—Aristotle and Plato, Roman Epicureans and Stoics, the Mediæval Church, the Renascence, Descartes and Bacon, French and German idealism, the revolutionists: and thence he comes down to Evolution, social and physical, Comte, Darwin, and Spencer. It is a history of Philosophy so far as belief in a law of progress is a factor in the civilisation of Humanity. The book is dedicated to Saint-Pierre, Condorcet, Comte, Spencer, “and other optimists.”

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Like all vast generalisations, the idea of human Progress and the conscious sense of a common civilisation was a very slow movement, built up gradually by partial enlightenment and fitfully seen by poets and thinkers in special manifestations. Bacon and Descartes and their followers in the seventeenth century changed the whole basis of speculative thought;

¹ *The Idea of Progress*, by J. B. Bury (Macmillan and Co., 8vo., 1920).

Voltaire, Diderot, Turgot, and the Encyclopædists in the eighteenth century, enlarged these new ideas so as to touch the moral and social condition of man. But Professor Bury treats the Abbé de Saint-Pierre about the middle of the eighteenth century, famous author of the "Project of Perpetual Peace," as the first to imagine a Utopia of Progress in human civilisation. Narrow as was his knowledge of history, shallow as was his sense of scientific truth, and naïf as were his projects to secure the happiness of all, the generous Abbé's heart had inspired a new optimism which dreamed of an indefinite progress to the welfare of man.

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It is with Montesquieu, Turgot, Diderot, and Condorcet that the idea of Progress as a practicable enlargement of civilisation first became a true social law, as part of a scientific philosophy of life. With all their limitations and prejudices, Montesquieu and Voltaire did much to popularise the idea of a philosophy of history. Diderot founded the belief of man as the centre of our World; the Encyclopædists and the Economists in various ways popularised this idea. Turgot was a great political reformer as well as a wise philosopher of life. But Condorcet is the true prophet of Progress, of which others had been the intellectual students. And it is Condorcet whom Professor Bury honours with special interest. "It is amazing," he writes, "that the optimistic *Sketch of the Progress of the Human Mind* should have been

composed when he was hiding from Robespierre in 1793"; and that it was written without books was "a marvellous *tour de force*." And in the Dedication the Professor couples the name of Condorcet with that of Comte, as indeed Positivists do also.

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Mr. Bury passes on to criticise Rousseauism and British and German philosophers who had visions of Progress; but he considers that it is rather from France in the nineteenth century that came systematic theories of Progress as an ascertainable law of civilisation. The more definite schools which made it the basis of schemes to mould society were those founded by Saint-Simon and August Comte. With discernment and solid evidence, the Professor treats Saint-Simon as the successor of Condorcet, and Comte as the successor of Saint-Simon. It was Saint-Simon who in 1814 transformed Cordorcel's idea of Progress, meaning a growth in knowledge and intellectual sanity into a far wider social power that explained the mediæval system and included religion as an essential social force. This pregnant conception is certainly the foundation of Positivism; and, as Mr. Bury says, Comte derived more from Saint-Simon than he or his French disciples were willing to admit. Comte broke with Saint-Simon at the age of twenty-two, and he did not begin his System of Philosophy until five years after Saint-Simon's death. Unsystematic and elusive as was that founder of a sect of Socialists, the Count must be regarded as the first who

propounded a dogmatic scheme of general social Progress. He it was who in 1814 wrote : "The golden age is not behind us, but in front of us. It is the perfection of social order."

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But Professor Bury naturally treats Comte as far the most important and systematic apostle of the idea of Progress. All Positivists will accept the words with which he opens his Chapter XVI. :—

"Auguste Comte did more than any preceding thinker to establish the idea of Progress as a luminary which could not escape men's vision. The brilliant suggestions of Saint-Simon, the writings of Bazard and Enfantin, the vagaries of Fourier, might be dismissed as curious rather than serious propositions, but the massive system wrought out by Comte's speculative genius—his organic scheme of human knowledge, his elaborate analysis of history, his new science of Sociology—was a great fact with which European thought was forced to reckon. The soul of this system was Progress, and the most important problem he set out to solve was the determination of its laws."

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Professor Bury gives a thoughtful sketch of Comte's philosophy of history and the famous " law of the three stages." This is not the place to discuss his account of the *Philosophie Positive* (1830-1842). I will only note one or two points. Comte's law never implied that the human organism, or Society, was ever successively in one or other of the three stages ; but that individual minds and branches of knowledge pass through three phases in that order :—individual minds and societies often being in all three stages simultaneously as to different matters. I remark also that Comte did treat the future of Asiatic and Polynesian

races—Islam and Hindooism—in his *Politique Positive* (1854). Again, why assume that men in the earliest prehistoric age were not fetichists, *i.e.*, attributed to external objects what they themselves felt or feared? The races who killed the mammoth may have had much intelligence; but what do we know of their theories about Nature other than such as we find in primitive people? And, even if the tribes who inhabited European caves *had* evolved a system of Theology, as Mr. Bury suggests, may *they* not have had predecessors, and again, are they the true ancestors of ourselves to-day? There may have been a huge gap in the glacier ages.

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Professor Bury limits his study of Comte to the *Philosophie*, and does not seem to know the *Politique Positive* (1851-1854, English translation and analysis, 1875-1877). But Comte's philosophy of history and of progress is most fully stated in the third volume of the *Politique* (1853). Many points in the Professor's criticism would be cleared up by referring to this work and to Dr. J. H. Bridges' *Illustrations of Positivism* (second edition, 1915). If Professor Bury would turn to the *New Calendar of Great Men* (of which a new edition is in the press), he will find about seventy of the philosophers and men of science, whom he mentions, treated in the sense of Comte's philosophy of history, and largely in complete agreement with his own views. Reference to English students of Comte would show that they, at least, never attribute to his

writings any doctrine of *finality*, that they recognise many of his speculations as ideals to meditate on rather than to act out in the immediate present, that they repudiate any idea of orthodoxy and sacerdotalism, that they in their own society and the practice of their lives reject the names of "sect," of "Comtism," of "authority"; indeed, as a matter of fact, profess and claim a full measure of personal liberty of thought and action.

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Mr. Bury then treats of the theory of Evolution and Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) as having introduced the third stage in the idea of Progress. And, as he says,

"the ablest and most influential development of the argument from evolution to Progress was the work of Spencer. He extended the principle of evolution to sociology and ethics, and was the most conspicuous interpreter of it in an optimistic sense."

The summary of Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy* (1862), with which Mr. Bury practically closes his study, will be accepted by most of Spencer's followers, though they may not accept the criticisms with which it is followed. The Professor evidently regards Spencer as the most resolute upholder of philosophic optimism.

"The synthesis of the world-process which these volumes lucidly and persuasively developed, probably did more than any other work, at least in England, both to drive home the significance of the doctrine of evolution and to raise the doctrine of Progress to the rank of a commonplace truth in popular estimation, an axiom to which political rhetoric might effectively appeal."

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The interesting question then arises : How far does Professor Bury himself believe in Progress? Is he one of the "other optimists" to whom, with the leading Four, his book is dedicated? We search the Preface and the Epilogue ; and we must admit that we find no conclusive answer. He declares that his present attempt is "a purely historical inquiry." On the other hand, he raises the problem of Progress to a dominant moral and even religious power. He finds that the hope of Progress has reformed the ethical code of the Western world. The hope of an ultimate happy state on this planet to be enjoyed by future generations has replaced, as a social power, the hope of felicity in another world. Progress seems to be a counter-balance to the idea of Providence and the dogma of personal immortality in Heaven. The Professor has spent an immense amount of learning and of thought on the genesis of this idea. He sees how ethics and creed are largely involved in it. Is it a great truth : is it an *idolum saeculi?* He leaves the answer to us. As a last word he asks—if the law of Progress comes out of the law of Evolution, may it not be itself evolved into some other unknown law of change? Optimists will reply : Perhaps it may be ; and we will leave the infinite æons to come to settle that question in their own good time.

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All those who enjoyed the society of Henry James, and the far wider range of his readers all over Europe and America, will be glad to see the letters which he

wrote to his family and his friends, and which have now been edited with skill and care by Mr. Percy Lubbock.¹ They will reveal to the world without the charm of his personality and a nature of rare affectionateness, brimming over with generous sympathy for all forms of beauty and of intelligence, yet all the while endowed with an inexhaustible spirit of subtle observation. These letters to parents, brother, sister, nephews, nieces, cousins, and aunts, give us a bright picture of New England family love and companionship which has a primitive freshness in the air of our crowded, hustling, standardised British life. Here we have a cultured and keen American mind studying British ways and the ever-revolving scene of old Europe with thorough detachment, as if it were being studied from another continent. The young naïf traveller from New York descends upon us, as it might be from Mars, all eyes, all nature's child, keen to get to the heart of old Europe, finding how strange and complex it is, and yet with such culture in his brain and such sympathy in his heart that it fills him with intense and growing interest. He is among us—long not at all of us—then he passes to view the charm of Italy and the *esprit* of France. But Europe, England, London, Kent, grasp his soul more and more. Wilsonian neutrality in the great war revolts him, almost kills him. At last he is wholly with us on the side of defending civilisation. In July, 1915,

¹ *The Letters of Henry James*, selected and edited by Percy Lubbock (Macmillan and Co., 2 vols., 1920).

he is naturalised, Mr. Asquith and Mr. Gosse being two of his sponsors. In February, 1916, whilst the Republic was still an unfriendly neutral, he dies as a British subject and O.M.

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Until the last this loving, generous, gentle soul of his seems never to have been touched by any public care, seems hardly aware of war, revolution, or policy, either in America or in Britain, until the great upheaval of 1914 overwhelmed his hitherto tranquil spirit of detachment and neutrality. He knew the leaders ; he was in the whirl of our politics ; nothing of them touched him, hardly gave him a moment's thought. Again, with a nature of such tenderness, with streams of affection flowing from his pen-tip to scores of "dearest Emilys," "dearest Betsys"—they cannot all be cousins—this love for beautiful and gracious women never seems to have got concentrated upon any one, even for a time. In all these forty-six years of a correspondence brimming over with loving words to men and to women there is not the faintest trace of any supreme affection. This subtle master of the human heart lets us see no scintilla of personal romance of his own. Let those who care to read between the lines of these letters try if they can discover any such.

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These Letters suggest two points—first as to the mental habit and secondly as to the style of Henry

James. He seems to close his mind resolutely against any interest in warring causes and social movements. In a letter of advice to his nephew he says, in 1899, "Thank God I've no *opinions*—not even on the Dreyfus case. I'm more and more only aware of things as a more or less mad panorama, phantasmagoria and dime museum." And there is more in this Carlyle vein. But this devotion to Art broke down in the Great War in 1914. Again, the letters prove his intense *modernity* of mind. Not only will he put aside the clash of parties and nations, but he turns with indifference from the Past. There is no trace that he ever seriously cared for history, or lived in the past—even in Rome, or Paris, in Florence, Venice, or Touraine. In each he is the American tourist, keen about art and society. He tells Mr. Gosse, in 1900, that he hungers and thirsts for "a gleam of reflection of the life *we* live, of artistic or plastic intelligence of it, something one can say Yes or No to, as discrimination, perception, observation, rendering."

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This passion for the present visible scene of modern life reacts upon his culture and on his style. To read these Letters one would think that he was indifferent to, almost ignorant of, the great literature of the past. In a flood of correspondence with men of letters, students, and critics, there is a great deal about modern romance, drama, and art, but hardly a single word about our great English writers in verse or prose.

I find nothing about Wordsworth, Cowper, Gray, Burns, Goldsmith, Gibbon, Fielding, Richardson, Sterne, Dryden, Pope, not even about Milton or Spenser. He must have read them; but they seem not to have been infused into his mind, and they certainly did not form his style. If he had really studied the *Letters* of Cowper, of Gray, of Walpole, would he have written these, or the curiously tessellated and mystically interwoven passages in so many of his graceful romances? If he had been born and trained in Old—not in New—England his mind would have had a broader range, and his style would have had a simpler and an easier flow.

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But let us not overlook the many bright and suggestive pictures of illustrious Victorians. What loving portraits of Burne-Jones, of William Morris and of his wife—"a grand synthesis of all the Pre-Raffaelite pictures"—of Mrs. Humphry Ward, of Turgenev, of Stevenson, of the Eliot Nortons, of George Meredith, of Gladstone, of Ruskin, of George Eliot, of Paul Bourget, and Alphonse Daudet. In this age of caricatures, diaries, and abominable indiscretions, how sweet, how generous, how artless are all these revelations of a very affectionate and subtle spirit poured out in such volubility to the men and women of a large and distinguished family from New England, and to such a circle of cultured people, both English and foreign. Henry James, though domi-

ciled and naturalised in Britain, was still American from first to last. The simplicity, the lovability, the graceful *enfantillage*, of his open heart are a refreshing relief from our national *morgue*.

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JUNE

-1920-

VI

LET us face the facts. The relations between the Three Great Powers and the League of Nations are not only anomalous and confusing, but they show the impotence of the Covenant for all effective purposes. The Powers *refer* a mandate on the Baltic Powers to the League—which naturally refuses it, as having neither authority, nor arms, nor means. The Three and the League are really the same body under different names; but they act as if they were rival and even unfriendly Powers. The Three have great armies in the field and great nations in their hands. The League has nothing but costly officials, commissions, and resolutions. To protect a small State it has no more real power than the Society for Protection of Women and Children. It is now certain that America will never work out in Europe the Wilsonian Covenant. Without America the League is bankrupt. Let us face facts, and cease to chase a Utopian mirage. Our three Allied nations must do the best they can to clear up the urgent problems which threaten us all with ruin.

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It is not for us to judge the political problems and parties within the Republic. There was much to justify both sides in the deadlock between President and Senate—Democrat and Republican. It is entirely for them to settle things in their own way in their own home. But see the result of the deadlock on the world around! It is plain that the Covenant and the Fourteen Points were the American condition on which the Republic brought its enormous weight, its wealth, its inexhaustible armies and material resources, into the war. But for that Covenant, Britain, France, and Italy would have made a quick, plain, direct Peace with their enemies in some form. But the terms of American intervention had entirely transformed the whole situation. The civilised nations had been banded into a moral Alliance. Their potential force, as well as their material force, as such an Alliance, was overwhelming. The Peace had been bound up with the American Utopia. And fifty races in Europe and in Asia were fired with the passion of self-assertion at the call of the biggest of the Entente Powers. Then the domestic quarrel in the Republic broke out. It withdrew both in action and in council. It left its deserted comrades in war to deal with the confusion of Europe and to pacify the furious hopes and hates of races.

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The Republic withdrew in action : it did not withdraw in words. Refusing to meet in Council, refusing men, money, or goods to its own creation, the

League of Nations, it did not cease to criticise, to complain, and to interfere, both officially and unofficially, in the doings of its late Allies, and in the execution of its own Treaty. It did not ratify its own Treaty, yet it condemned the Allies who have ratified theirs. The President would do nothing, meet no one, discuss nothing; yet he claimed to dictate to us his wishes or his censures from his sick-room. Senators, mayors, the Press, bark and growl about British attempts to settle convulsions in the world—which the Republic will not touch, inasmuch as “it passes by on the other side.” And the journals and even important public men, use Ireland, Egypt, India, and the sea, as counters in their own party game. We well know the supreme necessity of a good understanding between our peoples—the awful consequences of a rupture. And our public men and our Press bear insults and injuries in silence. But a man, wholly independent of any party or place, a man who has for a lifetime honoured the greatness and destinies of the Republic, may fairly ask—in this terrible hour when civilisation is in sore straits—is it an honourable part of so glorious a nation to jeer at the Good Samaritan whilst it prefers to “pass by on the other side”?

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That the League of Nations formally declines the mandate to protect and save Armenia, is a cruel blow to the hopes and promises which for years have buoyed up that piteous people. After all that has

been said and done by Britons and Americans from the time of Gladstone and Salisbury, it looks like weakness or bad faith to surrender these remnants of an ancient race to their oppressors, or rather to their assassins. Yet it cannot be weakness or bad faith. It is Fate. Who can undertake such a distant and impracticable task, if the League of Nations declares that it has no power for such an undertaking? What a mockery is this League which in its consolidated might of the Great Powers was to protect the small weak States. What could have been done at the end of 1918 is impossible now. Where are the armies that can save this ancient, Christian, civilised, half-massacred race, surrounded by savage enemies in far-off Asia, whom our own Musulman fellow-citizens will not permit us to crush or curb, as it would be disrespectful to the successor of their Prophet?

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Surely the awful prospect of the final extermination of a Christian nation must appeal to the great American people who for generations have worked so hard and promised so much to help the oppressed races in Turkey. American missionaries and philanthropists have done more for Armenians than any others in Europe. It was the American President and American representatives who, during the war and the Conferences, most passionately pleaded for a League of Nations to protect the weak peoples in the

East. The belief of the world was that, whatever other task the Republic undertook, the mandate to save Armenia would be their obvious duty. And now an internal dispute seems to reject that and every European cause until after March, 1921, at earliest. The League of Nations which Europe accepted at the urgent insistence of U.S.A. is powerless in the absence of her vast resources in energy, in wealth, in men. And the strident appeal to self-determination, which the President fired as a subterranean mine below the heaving crust of European nationalities, has roused such storms of hope, ambition, and strife that the victorious Powers are over-strained in efforts to satisfy or control them.

These promises to weak peoples, these potential mandates, seem about to breed endless trouble and strife. I view with anxiety our proffers to Serbia, Greece, Syria, and Mesopotamia, as well as that to Armenians. One of the worst imbroglios is that of Palestine. I fear that Mr. Balfour's promise to the Jews was even more dangerous than his treaty with Italy. By all means let as many Jewish patriots as desire it, go to Palestine, purchase estates or farms, and settle there. But, as the country is now occupied by its ancient people, Musulmans, Christians, and others, with a very small Jewish minority, the idea of creating in it a new Jewish *Nation* is nonsense. The Allies and the Jews themselves are puzzled and divided about what Zionism means. There has been some ridiculous "hot air"—which we might call Zangwillism—which talks about dis-

possessing the Arab and non-Jewish population, even by force, and of constituting a Maccabean kingdom according to the "Jewish Peril." But even the more modest Zionism of bringing many Jews to Palestine is a fanciful Sinn Fein kind of dream. And I hope that our Government will give no more encouragement to the nonsense of creating any sort of Jewish *nation*.

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I am invited by the Zionist Central body to sign and support their Appeal to have Palestine made the Jewish National Home. Of all the mischievous and absurd cries about Races, this is the worst. Jews may be a *race*, or a *sect*: they are not a *nation*. They have a religion of their own, and inherit physical, moral, and intellectual qualities. But that does not make a nation; much less does it give a right to turn other races out of their own homes. Catholics do not pretend to be a nation, nor do they claim to turn all inhabitants out of the Papal States of the Church. Gypsies are not a nation: nor do they claim to return and drive the Fellahs out of Egypt. All people with red hair or long noses, or all the Smiths and Joneses in the Empire or America, might as well pretend to be a "nation"; or the Danes claim to return to their ancestral homes in East Anglia. Jews not only are not a nation; but they have been for 2,000 years citizens of almost every nation on the earth. They have been active members of countless political nationalities for ages—especially of British,

American, French, Italian, and German. They are no more a nation than Buddhists or Quakers.

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And what right have they to Palestine? More than 1,000 years before Christ they savagely overran that land and massacred its native peoples. If *race* is decisive, it belongs to the remnants of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. History records no more ruthless extermination than the story in *Holy Writ* how they destroyed man and woman, young and old, ox, sheep, and ass—all except their friend, Rahab, the harlot. Nothing more horrible is recorded of Attila and his Huns, or of Wilhelm and his “Huns.” A few centuries later they were carried off as slaves; and, except for short intervals, they never recovered the country as a nation, but lived in it as scattered exiles. In Greek and Roman times they were only refugees, who had no national or territorial rights. In the Gospel age the inhabitants of all Syria were largely Greek or Roman in race, in allegiance, in language, and in civilisation. And now, because of this original massacre and because they crucified the Founder of Christianity, this Arab tribe, which has been wandering about the world for two thousand years and has lost all sense of common language, or political unity, or agricultural habits, summons the Supreme Council to place it as “a nation,” and imitate Joshua in turning out the lawful inhabitants. Many rash promises

were made in the stress of war, and we have too many mandates as it is.

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I cannot pass over the Centenary of Herbert Spencer without a word to express my honour to the most important English philosopher of the nineteenth century. I knew him well for more than forty years; I worked with him in many a public cause; I carried on controversies with him, which happily ended in personal sympathies; and I have published in more than one book, and especially in my Oxford *Herbert Spencer Lecture*, 1905, my own estimate of his system of philosophy. I am well aware that the twentieth century turns, with a perhaps inevitable reaction, from those whom the nineteenth century honoured. But the mature judgment of the future will do justice to the profound powers of mind and the inexhaustible industry which Spencer brought to his task in a long life of devotion to intellectual and moral progress. His signal achievement was to have been the only English thinker, since the crude attempt of Bacon, who had systematically worked out a *Synthesis* of general knowledge.

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This is so vast, so rare, and yet so dominant an achievement that, even if later knowledge reveals its errors and its incompleteness, it takes a place of its own in the history of human thought. In a new book Professor Bury has shown how a synthetic theory of civilisation reacts on moral, political, and religious

ideas from age to age; and he very justly groups together as the founders of our law of Progress Condorcet, Comte, and Spencer. It is Spencer, in fact, who alone in the English-speaking world has developed the philosophy which on the Continent arose after the convulsion that closed the eighteenth century. Our great English men of physical science and of moral and social science have worked more or less on specialist and limited fields, where conclusive accepted results are possible. Spencer is still "our one synthetic philosopher." The attempt to frame a real concatenation of scientific and moral ideas has effects so pervading and constructive that it retains its permanent power over subsequent thought, although in many parts its solutions are not accepted as final. Thus Spencer will rank with Bacon, Locke, Hume, Adam Smith, and Darwin.

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I am much interested in the very timely book just published by Mr. Hartley Withers.¹ He is an economist of great experience and of signal independence of judgment; and he has written a lucid and balanced estimate of the current schemes of industrial reform. It is a manual of the case for Capitalism, which should be invaluable were it taken to heart both by employers and employed, for it is by no means a partisan defence of Capital, of which it frankly states the evils and the defects under present conditions. For its evils and its defects he proposes social, moral,

¹ *The Case for Capitalism* (Eveleigh Nash Co.), pp. 255.

and practical remedies ; but after a close examination of various forms of Communism, State Socialism, Bureaucratic, and Guild Socialism, he shows the solid advantages of a recognised system of Capitalism over all the tyranny, monopoly, and chaos which must result from any of the familiar schemes of eliminating Capital by a vast social and economic revolution.

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He opens his study with a chapter on the " Weakness and Strength of Capitalism " ; and in this he states fully the ordinary attacks made on it, and then the gain to freedom and general utility which it confers on the mass of the citizens in a normal democracy. There is another chapter on the " Achievements of Capitalism " in conferring on the public the enormous improvements in human life in recent times, as compared with the oppression and sufferings of former generations—and this in spite of all that rhetoric can declaim as to still unremedied abuses. In the incalculable multiplicity of modern life the demagogue can find a ready text. The true reformer in politics or in economics must patiently survey the entire field and set off local and partial evils against the widespread ruin that yawns in the darkness of an unknown abyss of social upheaval. We can all see how a crazy social gospel of new industry converts a magnificent and populous city into the dying wilderness of Leningrad.

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With inexorable logic Mr. Withers exposes the mendacious sophists who tell excitable workmen that the "capitalist is a thief"; and the card-sharper trick of Karl Marx that Capital robs Labour of the "surplus value." This is the poison seed that has grown up as Bolshevism. Every sane economist knows that "profit" earned over the wages paid out usually has to be devoted (1) to the debts due for rent, plant, materials, and capital lent for user, (2) to reserve and fresh industrial undertakings, and (3) in a very minor degree, often very moderate, to the personal use of the capitalist. Without No. (1) there would have been no work produced and no wages at all paid; without No. (2) there would be constant stagnation and no increase of business or wider employment. And yet Labour leaders allow ignorant workmen to be gulled into fancying that the entire "surplus profit" is (a) their own product and property, and (b) is plundered by the capitalist. Labour will never be fit to form a Government until it has induced the working masses to put aside this silly falsehood of Marx.

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After showing the radical antagonism between State Socialism and Guild Socialism, and the repudiation of State bureaucracy by both, Mr. Withers ends with an admirable chapter on "Capitalism and Freedom." Though Capitalism has its own defects, it protects citizens against the oppressive bondage inevitable in every known form of Communism,

Socialism, or Guilds. Guilds could only live by enforcing rigid monopolies. Socialism cannot wriggle itself out of bureaucratic despotism. Socialists and Guildists regard the general public as mere "fodder" for their fads. The "consumers" mean the whole commonwealth except themselves, and are to be their bond-slaves, to buy what they tell them, do what they are ordered to do, and pay the prices that they fix. Socialism and Guildism are Sinn Fein in working clothes. Ireland and Russia to-day are the Paradise of the "top-dog." As to workmen showing rare zeal for the State, Mr. Withers tells us how the Tommies in camp laughed when he asked if they found "fatigue work" so stimulating. Altogether Mr. Withers' book is a wholesome manual of rational industry. The only part of the case for Capitalism which he omits is that of the moral value and the moral duty of Capitalism, so powerfully enforced by Auguste Comte in his *Polity* as the Social ideal of a regenerated Humanity.

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The last—alas! the posthumous—tale of Mrs. Humphry Ward (*Harvest*, Collins and Co.) will be widely read by all who love her books, but also as a record of her splendid activity to the last breath of life during these cruel days of war and toil. I know not if it will add to her literary reputation. For myself, as an old friend, I value it for telling us so much of herself. No woman in all these six years of stress and strain worked so hard, saw so much, studied so

deeply the problems in France, Belgium, and America, appealed so vividly to the hearts of men and of women, in the cause of a better world for those who are to come. Years hence this little book will be found a living chronicle to explain how women took to the land and to men's work and ways and clothes, how the villages took their part, and pensioners of both sexes, parsons, and squires, Canadians and Americans, fell into rank in the old country. Mrs. Ward was to the last one of the most strenuous opponents of Votes for Women. This book will show that she rejoiced in seeing all that women could do—and only wished them to hold fast to what women can do best.

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Although the young mockers cease not to call out "Go up" to the bald-headed Victorian prophets, it is curious how persistently the Georgians seem busy with records of Victorian work. The poets, priests, writers, and politicians of the nineteenth century have been studied in abundant biographies and criticisms; and a brilliant satirist has portrayed four Eminent Victorians in pungent vignettes, which look too much like snap-shots in a picture-paper. Happily now truer portraits of seven eminent Victorians have been given us by a sympathetic and serious student of modern thought. Mrs. W. L. Courtney's portraits¹ have every quality that Mr. Lytton Strachey's

¹ *Freethinkers of the Nineteenth Century*, by Janet E. Courtney, O.B.E. Chapman and Hall, 1920.

want. They are based on careful study of the originals: they are singularly truthful: and they judge the character and the work of each subject with an impartial but kindly mind. I have been myself in close touch with Frederick Denison Maurice, Matthew Arnold, Charles Bradlaugh, Thomas Huxley, and Leslie Stephen; and I have myself written estimates of Miss Martineau and of Charles Kingsley. And I am amazed to find how faithfully a Georgian lady from books has made my friends live again.

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The four “Eminent Victorians” were good subjects to be analysed—but they were not typical leaders of nineteenth-century thought and progress. The seven leaders of thought, chosen as types of Victorian opinion, differ widely both in character and in creed; but they were all stout asserters of liberty of judgment and pioneers of new phases of belief. “Free-thinkers” does not mean sceptics: it means those who burst obsolete bonds of tradition. Two of the seven were earnest parish priests: Arnold was a reformer of the Church: Huxley, Stephen, and perhaps Miss Martineau, were Agnostics: Bradlaugh was the only real Iconoclast. The seven Victorians have perhaps hardly any common mark except Honesty, Courage, Conviction. To my memory all seven are set forth in this book in the living form as I knew them—and withal are judged with a genial independence of mind. Mrs. Courtney is neither advocate nor satirist; she gives us the facts, and does

not range herself under anyone. I am myself personally much interested in her story of Maurice's life and family, as of all the seven I had chiefly moral sympathy with him, albeit the least intellectual agreement. In creed I am far more with Huxley and Stephen : and in sympathy and in belief, least of all the seven with Bradlaugh. If Maurice and Stephen could be amalgamated in one religious eirenicon, it would go far to realise a Positivist ideal.

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Of the seven biographies—suggestive and sound as they all are—the central and dominant names are those of Huxley and of Stephen (the only one who survived Queen Victoria). These two studies I would specially recommend young readers to mark, if they care to understand what we Mid-Victorians were thinking. They are also the only studies which Mrs. Courtney seems to have made from personal knowledge. Of Maurice, Arnold, Huxley, and Kingsley I have written so much in various books of my own, that I will only now say how entirely I am in general agreement with Mrs. Courtney's portraits. Both her Huxley and her Stephen are most faithful and interesting estimates. Stephen of them all was most near to me in age, in social and intellectual fellowship ; and I find in these pages a fine record of a noble life. I worked with him in many a stiff road that he trod so stoutly : and I grieved to find that he would not join me when I trod paths of my own. Mrs. Courtney has told most vividly and faithfully her

story of some who in the last century fought and died in the long battle which, for more than fifty years, was waged to secure intellectual freedom for our children.

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JULY

-1920-

VII

IN the early days of climbing Mont Blanc travellers were told by the guides to keep silence at a certain *mauvais pas*, for fear that the vibration of speech might loosen an avalanche upon their heads. Our country is now passing through a corridor overhung with treacherous blocks. Its path has never been through such a confused conglomeration of dangers. Before these pages are read, some of these masses may have been left behind, or some of them may have fallen. Where any wrong utterance may do mischief, it is best to keep silence even from good words. The amazing complications of the various crises that beset our statesmen, with all the reactions of each dilemma on all the rest, cannot be treated in a few paragraphs or pages; and no one of these dilemmas ought to be handled apart from the rest. As the world rings with baseless rumours, many of which are concocted by envy, malice, or fanaticism, as the true facts are known to no one outside the inner councils, a mere observer of the political imbroglio, whatever he may think, had better keep to himself both criticism and advice. No man has a right to

make either of these public, unless he is able to judge the situation all round, *as a whole*.

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The long and checkered history of our country can show no time of manifold crisis like this. The whole world seems seething at once. A series of incalculable convulsions has entirely recast all familiar values. The war coming on us (at least to the public) like a bolt from the blue—the Russian *culbute*—the American descent upon Europe—her still more incredible desertion—the entire reconstruction of our Parliament—the entire revaluation of all industrial problems, of all financial, commercial, and class problems—the enormous responsibilities thrown on Britain by the Treaty and covenant and our alliance—the revolutions no longer latent in Ireland, Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Turkey, and India—all of these together make an unexampled chaos of problems. The Government has to deal with all of them at once, and each of them in view of all the rest. Parties, the Press, factions, classes, and groups, each call out separately for their own special cause. They will not see that each problem depends on a network of other problems. Do this! Do that! Do not do this! is shouted by ten thousand throats. But it is impossible to do anything—even to cease doing—unless all the surrounding conditions are taken into account and solved. All I say is, no man has a right to judge the situation, unless he will study all the complica-

tions of the crises, and will weigh each proposed plan in the light of its relation to all the rest.

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At this most critical hour of the Anglo-French *Entente*, a very timely work has been given us in English—the *Life* of the great French Patriot of 1870 by an eminent French statesman—now President of the Republic.¹ Gambetta was far the greatest Frenchman of his time; and his death at the age of 44 was an irreparable loss to France and to Europe, for as an inspiring national force he was at least the equal of Cavour or Bismarck, and he had a nobler nature than either of these. The story of his wonderful career (1838-1882) has now been told with singular lucidity and perfect truth by M. Deschanel, one of the wisest as well as the best informed of living statesmen in France. This analysis of the long duel between France and Germany from 1870 to 1918, by one who has long been of the inmost circle of French diplomacy, is invaluable to enable Englishmen to understand the internecine struggle in which France has lived for two generations. Though M. Deschanel ends his book at 1882, it throws a flood of light on the problems which the Great War has sought to solve in blood and ruin. Let Englishmen study this admirable *Life*, if they wish to know what are the aims and dilemmas of Frenchmen. Gambetta was the type of all that is best in France: M. Deschanel has proved himself to be a masterly historian.

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¹ *Gambetta*, by Paul Deschanel. W. Heinemann, 8vo., 15s.

The book has a singular interest for me, and I feel justified in bearing witness to its scrupulous impartiality and its truth, because during the whole period I followed with keen sympathy every phase of French politics, was constantly in France, and was in close touch with many French politicians. I knew Gambetta personally and discussed the situation with him in his house in the Rue Montaigne, where he gathered his colleagues to his breakfast parties. I have heard him as President of the Chamber. I knew many of his colleagues, especially Ranc, Challomel-Lacour, Louis Blanc, Spuller, Saint-Hilaire, Saint-Simon, Rouvier, Felix Faure, Jules Ferry. During the great Seize-Mai struggle of 1877, I was for three months in France, and as the *Times correspondent*, I was even acting in concert with Gambetta's party. When Gambetta first appeared in the Chamber, I was writing at home on the necessity for union between France and England as the prime condition of European peace. The day after his death, *i.e.* on January 1st, 1883, I pronounced a eulogy on his career at Newton Hall. Few Englishmen can have studied the whole story of Gambetta's work in France more continuously than I have done. And I find M. Deschanel's biography a truly Tacitean account of his illustrious chief.

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The *Life* is written with all the literary charm and the scrupulous *justesse* of a French Academician. It is no panegyric, no legend, no apology. It is based

on a thorough study of Parliamentary Papers, the *Mémoires* of the chief politicians engaged abroad and at home, and several unpublished letters of Gambetta himself. An unusual grace is given to this biography of a profound statesman by his beautiful love-letters to his beloved Léonie, to whom he wrote daily and who exerted over him so useful an influence. These letters, says M. Deschanel, "form a romance that throbs with passion." "You are my moral and intellectual home," he wrote to her in 1876. This *Life* of a statesman is no encyclopædia of blue-books and despatches: it is the romance of a wonderful career. Gambetta was not, like Cavour and Bismarck, born with title and wealth, but in the modest home of a naturalised Italian tradesman. His education, his club-debatings, his penury, his life as a student and then at the bar, are full of Parisian character. M. Deschanel gives a life-like portrait of the irrepressible passion of the man. I too have seen him bound up from his chair, when I asked him why they did not continue the fight in 1871. "*Parce qu'ils n'avaient pas de courage*," he roared. As Paul Deschanel truly says: he was possessed with "the passion for France."

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Gambetta was the soul of France in the last desperate defence of 1871; but he was even greater as founder of the Republic, 1873-1877. M. Deschanel very truly shows that the construction of a constitutional Republic was essentially the work of

Gambetta. The Republic has now endured through tremendous strains for exactly half a century, whilst the Empire which Bismarck founded has pulled itself down in shameful, final ruin. As the President says, Gambetta brought to his life-long task "practical, effective statesmanship." During my long travels in France, July to November, 1877, I visited the groups of the Gambettist 363 deputies all over France, and I saw how the chief in Paris was the centre of the entire Liberal party—the Foch of the republican armies. He told the Marshal President either "*se soumettre ou se démettre*"; and he made good the summons. As Lamartine said of Mirabeau—"his ringing phrases became the proverbs of the Revolution." This was far more true of Gambetta's, for his epigrams were both the battle-cry of revolution and also the maxims of reconstruction. Gambetta was greater than Mirabeau or Danton. Mirabeau knew that he had "left nothing but a vast upheaval." Danton said—"Let our memory perish!" Gambetta's memory will live as the Washington of the Republic of France.

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Gambetta was no mere orator and party chief. He was a far-sighted statesman, who had solid convictions of sound policy deep-seated in his brain. The President shows how the practical politician was inspired by the theories of Auguste Comte—who "exercised a great and ever increasing influence over him." When fanatical radicals attacked the very spirit of

government and tried to suppress the army, Gambetta crushed them with a speech which embodied Comte's motto—*Order and Progress*. As M. Deschanel says: “for the first time the mind of a politician was guiding universal suffrage towards an organised democracy.” “His mind was saturated with Mirabeau and Comte.” At the Sorbonne, Gambetta described Comte as “the most powerful thinker of the age.” As M. Deschanel says—“The teachings of Auguste Comte had at this time a widespread influence”; and at a banquet in honour of M. Littré, Gambetta declared himself practically a believer in the positivist ideal of moral science applied to politics. The whole positivist body in France continued to give Gambetta a hearty support in all his political activities. To them he has always seemed the true type of the republican statesman—who disdains to be either demagogue or dictator.

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It must not be supposed that this fine study of the President, full as it is of wise state-craft and lucid analyses of complicated situations, fails to give us a picture of Gambetta—the man. His origin and upbringing are full of interest. Genoa, Gascony, Cahors, united to breed in him genius, passion, and resolution. His forbears were Catholic, some of his uncles, priests. His looks, which some jesters called Jewish, were intensely Italian; his wit, humour and charm were intensely French. There were in him strains of *Rebelais*, *Mirabeau*, *Voltaire* and *Diderot*.

The *fou furieuæ* that Thiers once called him, had inexhaustible powers of work, of patience, of sagacious self-restraint. He not only saw the immediate need of the hour, but he foresaw how the present would work out. A fine saying of his is this : “Parties are formed by ideas : groups are formed by interests.” It is rare that the story of one who rode on the topmost waves of a great revolution can show so much of family affection, of love for a noble woman, of magnanimity to opponents. His rejoinder to Thiers when he cried out : “There sits the man who has freed our provinces from the occupation,” was the act of a generous soul and true patriot who can forget “party” and can smile at insults. Gambetta, indeed, was a truly great Frenchman ; and in this *Life* the President has written a book that is worthy of such a subject.

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In philosophy the problem of the hour is the Law of Progress. It is inevitable that, after a cataclysmic epoch of Change, thoughtful minds should ask : Is this Progress—is it morally and socially all to the good—is it destined to continue? Professor J. B. Bury, of Cambridge, published a very learned history of *The Idea of Progress*, on which I commented at the time. Mr. Marvin, of Oxford, and his friends have published, at the Clarendon Press, a series of essays on Progress from 1870 to 1914. And now the Dean of St. Paul’s has issued from the same Press his Romanes Lecture, entitled, as is Professor Bury’s

book, *The Idea of Progress*. Here we have three views of Progress. Professor Bury gives us, with scholarly judgment, the *history* of the Idea; the Oxford essayists see mostly the blessed signs of the change. The Dean is critical, trenchant, almost negative. Nothing so brilliant, so full of wit, of irony, of home thrusts at credulity and ignorance has appeared. We might think he had inherited the flashing rapier of a much older Dean, were it not that his long studies of the Platonists had endowed him with the Socratic vein of pungent probing to the root of all forms of conventional and emotional sophistry. The literary honours of this tri-partite discussion rest with Dr. Inge, who has certainly won the first round "on points."

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The key of the Dean's argument is disproof of the belief in a Law of Progress, automatic, inevitable, continuous, moral, and beneficent—stated in its most violent form by Spencer, and still the moving spirit of democratic rhetoric everywhere. As he shows, it is to misuse Darwin's science, if we assume that such a law of human perfectibility is a necessary result of evolution. Dr. Inge shows how little modern astronomy encourages the glorification of our planet and the infinite welfare of its inhabitants. Nor does scientific history disclose any continuous improvement in man's nature and happiness. But the dogma of necessary progress in things political is the mischievous lure that persuades the people that what

seems "to be coming" is necessarily good, and that the law of change is destined to sweep away such antique superstitions as Country, Property, Order, and Government. And the law of Progress in religion "has distorted Christianity." The Dean sweeps aside Spencer's preposterous dogmatism of differentiation in the Universe, as well as Hegel's dream of an unalterable and infinite Absolute—both of which are anathema to the philosophy of experience. With a great deal of this the school of thought with which I hold is in perfect agreement. We are meliorists, not optimists. We trust that Man can better himself and his earth, but has no automatic perfectibility to look to. We agree with Huxley that cosmic nature is far from Man's friend; but it is extravagant to call it Man's enemy. We do not see any certainty that man must be perfect. But we hope to do the best under difficult conditions to improve our lot—and also ourselves.

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It is not the business of an ecclesiastic to see truths in Comte, but it is the part of a philosopher to understand him. In assuming that Comte's philosophy accepts any absolute or necessary Law of Progress, Dr. Inge goes too far. Progress, indeed, is a primary and sacred motto of Positivist religion; but it is "Progress the End"—that is, the object of human endeavour—and, as it is to be inspired by Love, it is moral progress; and, being based on Truth, it is ever subject to external limits. Astronomy, Physics,

Physiology, Biology show us how vast, how menacing, are these limits. They are outrageously overstated in the scientific Agnosticism of Professor Huxley and in the cynical atheism of Bertrand Russell. Our environment on earth has infinite dangers and obstacles, and also infinite opportunities for good and for happiness. If it will only last for some millions of æons, that is quite enough for us. But when the Dean finds support in Huxley's and Russell's nightmare of a demonic world about to swallow up mankind, how does he reconcile such compromising terrors with the Omnipotence and Benevolence of a Creator? Positivists are not troubled either with the potential horrors of scientists nor with the logical dilemmas of Creation. They live in a world which courage and thought can make a tolerable home—at any rate for countless generations to come. That is enough: and they are not at all busy with metaphysical revelations about the Universe, nor with the baffling inconsistencies which obtrude on the prayers of theologians. It is a misunderstanding to assume that Comte either stated—or attempted to state—any “Law of Progress” as a necessary consequence of evolution. He stated the moral law, that is, the duty of humanity to improve itself and its own world, and that, as a fact, that duty had been fairly observed. Surely, this is on the lines of all rational Theology.

The Romanes Lecture is a veritable mine of home-truths, and it scintillates with brilliant epigrams. But home-truths have their brighter side in practice, and epigrams too often over-state them till they become paradoxes. A Bishop once told an eminent Darwinian that he saw the ape in him ; but do "we" to-day—does anybody—now believe we are "descendants of monkeys"? The rational view of history admits that civilisation ebbs and flows in successive stages of decline and growth ; but the doctrine of recurrent cycles is rejected by competent students as plainly contrary to facts. The Dean regards seven centuries—I presume from A.D. 300 to A.D. 1000—as the Dark Ages and worthless. He consigns to Nirvana the Latin Fathers and the Catholic Church, Tribonian and Roman law, Byzantine polity, literature, and art, Charlemagne, Alfred, Theodoric, and Otto. Does history show that "civilisation is a disease almost invariably fatal, unless its course is checked in time"? How would the Dean check civilisation? Have we "devastated the loveliness of the world"? Have we "enslaved the animal creation"? Do dogs, cats, horses, sheep, cattle, and elephants consider us to be human devils? Russians and Germans have done horrid brutalities, but has not the civilised world risen up in abhorrence? Has not the conscience of men—and still more of women—impelled them to deeds of humanity in vast populations such as were unparalleled in former Ages? Comte certainly held that "the Catholic monotheism of the Middle Ages was an advance upon pagan

antiquity." It is strange indeed to find an Anglican ecclesiastic ridiculing that as superstition.

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I remember a former Dean of St. Paul's who wrote a great book in praise of Latin Christianity. I am proud to think that Comte's whole conception of history is governed with the same idea of imperishable advance, both moral and intellectual, which we owe to the Middle Ages, and even to the Dark Ages. To write that Comte aimed at a Theocracy, or the subjection of State to Church, or to repression of free thought—this is misrepresentation; for the very centre of his system is complete independence of State and Church, of material and of spiritual power, and of unlimited freedom of opinion.

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In the end, however, the Dean, who is very sceptical about any regular Progress, gives us an ample field for Hope. Curiously enough, this is precisely the Positivist attitude to the future—at any rate on earth. We, too, have no absolute certainty of any *necessary* Progress. We acknowledge our human limitations and dangers. We hope to overcome them by faith, by science, by moral energy. So far we go with the Christian triad of Faith, Hope, Love. The evolution of Humanity seems to us on the whole to be morally progressive with cruel failures and setback. History of Man has a real, but somewhat chequered, continuity; and we will not allow ourselves to be downhearted by the noble indignation of

one who sometimes uses satire to give point to his moral warnings.

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Those whom the Dean's dilemmas have made downhearted may take comfort from studying another volume issued by the Clarendon Press—*Recent Developments in European Thought*, essays edited by F. S. Marvin, Oxford, 8vo., 1920. Mr. Marvin, the author of *The Living Past*, *The Century of Hope*, and other works, has now edited a volume of twelve essays by graduates of Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, St. Andrews, and Durham, to illustrate the “Progress of Western Civilisation” in the last generation, starting with the Franco-German War of 1870. The editor opens with the view that a great stage in the growth of unity among nations is marked by two international tragedies; but he does not agree with the Dean that the war of 1914 exhibited on the whole a cyclical reversion to mediæval barbarism. He admits that there is with some “a falling in the barometer of temperament,” but he finds that the tragedies of the period are rather on the surface than in the nature of humanity, and that “such an output of mental energy, rewarded by such a harvest of truth, is without precedent in man’s evolution.” He points to “the advance in international unity and social reform within the State,” both of which were heralded by Comte before 1857. He finds “good grounds for thinking that the average man has improved in goodness”; and still more that “the collec-

tive soul of man has grown." The man of science is certain that foresight will "make the reign of man upon the planet wider and firmer than before. The spirit of science is the spirit of hope."

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The same tempered optimism animates the other essays, which are occupied in tracing recent developments in philosophy, religion, history, economics, and biology. Their main business is to show *development*, which they do not claim to be at all automatic, necessary, or continuous, but which *on the whole*, and with frequent *failures and reactions*, they take to be conducive to human welfare. The essays on Philosophy and on Religion are much occupied with criticism of recent specialist theories, but neither essays are revolutionary nor pessimist. The learned and masterly study of *Historical Research* by Mr. G. P. Gooch is an invaluable summary of all that has been done in our times to show how "the scope of history has gradually widened till it has come to include every aspect of the life of humanity"—"an immense and almost an immeasurable advance in historic studies." This splendid survey of recent history amply justifies the editor's words (in p. 10): "No single generation before ever learnt so much, not only of the world around it, but also of the doings of previous generations." Alas! the *Romanes Lecture* would only lead us to think that we are *progeniem vitiiosiorem*.

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The essays on *Atomic Theories*, *Biology*, *Art*, *Music*, are specialist studies on recent achievements. The sixth essay, on *Political Theory*, by Mr. Lindsay, summarises new views about the functions of the State and the altered position of Parliament. It appears to be rather a statement of new books than a practical judgment on actual conditions. The coupling of Parliament and Trades Unions as equally legitimate sources of political power ignores the essential difference that Parliaments are chosen by electors of all degrees of interest, capacity and education—and now by women as well as men; whilst Trades Unions are associations of manual labourers necessarily with none but elementary education, and united by only one interest—that of gaining higher wages and making their labour easier. To gain these ends, they are usually indifferent to the welfare of other citizens and to that of Country, which many of them regard as a discredited Idol. All this would come under the head of the Anarchy which the Romanes Lecturer foresees, but yet it seems to fall in with the general optimism of this Oxford volume. The *Economic Development* is treated from three points of view—"The Industrial Scene, 1842," "Mining Operations," and "The Spirit of Association," all by Mr. C. R. Fay, of Cambridge. The three papers give a fair statement, from well-known text-books and Parliamentary inquiries, of the deplorable evils of the industrial civilisation which the Romanes Lecture denounces. But it goes on to show what great and continuous improvements have been

accomplished in eighty years by the untiring efforts of men in association, led by public-spirited men and women drawn from all classes and ranks. I am old enough to remember 1842 myself, both in town and in country; and, whatever Blue-books tell us of horrors and starvation, working people on the whole were quite as cheerful as they are to-day; they had many enjoyments which are now lost, and there was nothing like the amount of social discontent. Was Pickwick's England as terrible as Trotsky's Petrograd?

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So the book closes with a perfect paeon by Miss Melian Stawell to the ultimate enlargement of Humanity by the united efforts of Man. Its theme, like that of the Dean, is Hope—progress by human effort. Its motto is from Shelley—

To hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates—

It is indeed an idea which, at any rate in the Universities and in our science schools, the warnings of successive Romanes Lectures have not yet eliminated.

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In these times of Industrial Unrest no more valuable summary of sound thought has appeared than is Mr. Harold Cox's book, *Economic Liberty* (Longmans, 1920). He begins with a historical sketch of the freedom of labour, until it has developed into the

extreme licence of refusing to carry the King's troops and their equipment. He goes on to prove that Socialism of this kind "is of necessity the negation of liberty." The *Ethics of Property*, the *Ethics of Socialism*, *Class Warfare*, all rest upon the logical postulate that to destroy the institutions of Society, liberty of action must be suppressed and force must be used to assert the rule of the social theorists. Bolshevism, with its horrors, is a local and special form of tyranny; but all communistic and guild Socialism involves the same despotism—the same monopoly—the crushing out of all who resist the dominant factions is a necessity for Socialism; and Mr. Cox shows that this dogma is blandly asserted not only by Lenin, but by the leaders of International Socialism, by prominent officials of our great Trades Unions, as well as by the "intellectuals" who expound the Gospel of the New Life. Be my brother, or I will kill thee! says Lenin. The motto of Belgium is "L'Union fait la Force." The motto of our internationalists is "La Force fait l'Union"—Those who do not accept the Union creed must be made to feel its irresistible arm.

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Especially valuable just now is Mr. Cox's admirable chapter on Nationalisation. He traces the growth of this cry to the crises of war, the monopoly possessed by the coal-miners, and the dependence of Legislature and the Government on an enormous increase of Labour votes. The necessities of carrying

on the life of the public, ignorance of economic facts, and the eagerness of workers to take advantage of crises to gain more money—all these combine to make Nationalisation the lure to a millennium, in spite of all the proofs of its conspicuous failure.

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AUGUST

- 1920 -

VIII

THE Conventions at Chicago and at San Francisco have now (July, 1920) made it plain that no American help in the pacification and restoration of Europe can be expected before March, 1921, and, indeed, little, if any, and that very doubtful, during that year at all. It is a momentous and disastrous result of the world's high hopes; for the chaos and strife in which Europe exists to-day are mainly caused by its accepting the extravagant utopias of Woodrow Wilson. We stand practically alone—faced with an accumulation of menacing tasks:—sore-stricken and almost desperate allies, intolerable mandates thrust on us, jealous and bitter colleagues, impracticable promises to weak States, veiled or open rebellion, bankruptcy, even revolution, seriously discussed by statesmen. Look round the world. France in very reasonable anxiety, Italy in very bitter complaint, our enemies restless, defiant, and almost chaotic, Russia entirely chaotic, China nearly as bad, Japan in a dilemma, Poland in great peril, the Balkan people on the edge of war, Armenia deserted, Syria, Mesopotamia, Palestine in ferment

with monstrous liabilities, Egypt, India, Ireland, in revolt more or less violent.

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It is a sea of dangers to make the boldest feel grave. The mighty people of America, to whom not one-tenth of our difficulties were even tendered, have now formally refused to touch any outside tasks, and have resolved to give all their efforts to their own troubles at home. There are times when I could wish that we did so, too. I feel often that within our Empire, within the United Kingdom, are tremendous problems to solve, some almost beyond our strength, even if we let the world outside go to ruin in its own way, as American patriots say is the right thing to do. It may be—but Englishmen never shrink from tasks and duties to which they have once put their hand and given their best blood. The conditions of the world, more than our own desires or plans, have involved us in these accumulated liabilities. We have not the geographical aloofness of Americans, and we are not prone to run back into a moral aloofness, either. *Noblesse oblige.* The historic traditions of an ancient nation force it to hold fast, even in extreme risks. We smile at gambols to twist the tail of the sham heraldic lion ; it is not safe to pull the tail of the bulldog. No ! I am sorely tempted to say : we have done enough for alien nations—let us turn to do for ourselves. But I know that England must play her great part out.

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Much as I feel the impossibility of retiring from our duties, I repudiate the intolerable burden which many of them present in their official form. It is hopeless to do anything at all with regard to Russia. We can do nothing in arms or by embargo or official intercourse. Nothing can be done to Russia: nothing can be got from Russia. Let who will do business with Russians and get anything they can. Our Government had better leave Russia alone. So, too, let the Baltic peoples settle their own affairs. I fear we can do little to save Poland from the fate which it has so rashly drawn on itself. Fiume, Constantinople, Smyrna, Anatolia, even Armenia and Cilicia are imbroglios in which we may seek to be useful—but which we cannot settle by ourselves, and in which we ought not to exhaust our own strength. Italy and Yugo-Slavia must settle their claims by themselves. We have no right to back up the Greek adventure in Anatolia, nor have we anything to do with the Turks in Cilicia. As to Constantinople, the Dardanelles, and free sea-way into the Black Sea, we already have secured it, and can make it permanent. It is extravagant for Britain to attempt to settle the whole world in a state of internecine turmoil.

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Our Asiatic responsibilities, our “mandates” there, our African liabilities, are an even more tremendous charge. That “blessed word”—that fatal name—Mesopotamia, seems to open on us an interminable mirage of desert and wild nomads. The

prospect of civilising a vast tract of raw wilderness, over which restless Musulmans rove, is a dangerous delusion, which would be intolerable in the height of our former prosperity. If it be impossible at once to withdraw altogether, let us prepare to place it as soon as possible under the independent rule of some native chief, such as the Emir Abdulla. As to Palestine, which in a fit of perverse sentiment our statesmen promised to the Jews in the vein of rhetorical folly, in which Disraeli seized Cyprus, "as a means of civilising Asia Minor," the sooner we get out of this escapade the better. Why a Christian Power should surrender the scene of the Gospel to those who cried out "Crucify Him!" no one can say. If the French choose to conquer and hold all Syria, it is their adventure, and we should not assist. At any rate, let us get rid of mandates and spheres of influence as soon as possible. They are intolerable burdens and incalculable risks. It is monstrous that, in a time when bankruptcy, riot, and revolution yawn for us at home, we should be flinging countless millions and our best blood into these bottomless pits of Sheitan.

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It is surely time that Ministers returned from interminable conferences abroad to look after the imminent perils that gather round us at home. Debates in Parliament, especially those in the House of Lords, where statesmen can speak freely what they think and what they know, and the warnings of men of great financial experience must convince the most

thoughtless that the economic state of our country—indeed, of all Europe—has never been so near the brink of ruin. That is our first care, for it has behind it infinite dilemmas and perils. Then, the very constitution of the United Kingdom is in urgent need of repair. There are two problems concerning it which must be undertaken. One is a systematic scheme of Devolution based on the report of the Speaker. The other is the reform or recasting of the House of Lords. For my part, as to Devolution, I rather incline to the views of Mr. Murray Macdonald. For the Lords the report of Lord Bryce prepares the ground. In any case, what is needed is a real, efficient, independent Second Chamber to embody the counsels of the Elder Statesmen. Nothing can be worse than the democratic nostrum of a Single Chamber autocracy. The worst of all autocracies is an ochlocracy. As Lord Grey has said: Single Chamber rule would be “the very devil.”

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To everyone who has to do with our economic problems, be he workman, employer, or politician, a really indispensable book is the new revised edition of *The History of Trade Unionism*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb (Longmans and Co., 1920). The original edition of 1894 was an exhaustive and authoritative account of this great element of modern industrial life; and the indefatigable authors have now extended their work to the present year, adding about 250 pages, or something like a third of the whole.

They say with truth that the thirty years which have elapsed since 1890 have been momentous in the history of Trade Unionism ; have enormously increased its numbers, wealth, and power ; have recast its legal and internal organisation—that Labour are already the “Opposition,” and make a bid to be the “Government.” This is indeed to write what is practically a new book—and it is one which every public man, whether his part lies in the theory or the practice of economics, will do well to master. As one who has been in close association with this movement now for at least sixty years, and who in its latest development differs widely from the theories of these authors, I make bold to say that the new volume is a permanent contribution to the history of our times.

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During the last thirty years—which the new part of the work covers—the membership of the societies increased from about one and a half millions to more than six millions—from about 20 per cent. of the adult male manual workers to 60 per cent., or 12 per cent. of the census population ; and this increase has been nearly continuous during that period, common to various grades of workers and in both sexes. And this has been accompanied by a series of Acts of the Legislature and new organisation within, such as various Amalgamations and Federations, the Shop Stewards’ movement, and the Guild System and the claim to “Direct Action.” The outstanding feature of the Trade Union world has been the enormous

advance in organisation and influence of the miners, the railway men, and the transport workers. The history of all these is elaborately worked out with figures and incidents, including the famous Sankey commission, and the railway strike of September, 1919. Needless to say, that both of these are described from the workmen's point of view, Mr. Sidney Webb being their representative on the Commission ; and the story would be very differently told by those who defend the interests of the public and the institution of Property which it is sought to "socialise."

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But on the whole there is only a minimum of partisan colour in this book as a real *history* of Trade Unionism. It is rather an encyclopædia of industrial facts ; and not a single element in this immense field is omitted, nor is the historian sunk in the advocate. The long, tangled, and confused series of Acts of Parliament from the beginning of the nineteenth century is accurately stated, the various Commissions of Inquiry beginning with 1867 and the consequent settlement of 1875, the entrance of Socialism about 1880-82, the growth of the Congress, the dock strikes, the eight hours' day movement, the miners' strike of 1911, the Osborne judgment, the effects of the great war, the demand for socialisation, syndicalism, share in management, "direct action," co-operative alliance, the Labour Party in Parliament, Soviets and the Independent Labour Party, profit-sharing and

the Whitley Councils—all of these are treated with accuracy and with necessary detail. The book, in fact, is the material by which this vast and growing industrial power may be studied, rather than a body of opinions by which it is to be judged.

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And now, as I look back over the sixty years of my own experience of Trade Unionism, I am filled with a mixture of feelings of confidence and of anxiety, nor can I altogether share the exultations of my friends the authors. In the present century the fundamental character of Unionism has changed. What was once a movement to equalise the resources of Labour in dealing with Capital has degenerated into a vast social war to eliminate Capital. When I sat on the first Royal Commission of 1867-9 Unionism was a constitutional movement to bring employers to satisfy the claims of the wage-earners. For forty years it did this with signal success, and all men of good will rejoice in the blessed improvement in the moral and material conditions of the workers it has achieved. They are vast, general, and permanent. But to-day Unionism, at least in its official and vocal form, is Socialist—it stands for a catastrophic social revolution, aiming at the removal of Employers as an order, the elimination of Wages as an institution, at the workers being (under universal democracy) their own employers, in a word in being masters not only of Industry, but of Society. Our authors recognise this momentous change in their first sentence. In

1894 they described a Trade Union as a continuous association of wage-earners to improve the conditions "of their employment." In 1920 they alter this to the conditions "of their working lives." They explain that Unionism no longer recognises a capitalist or wage-system at all.

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Now a catastrophic social revolution such as this is not to be faced with a light heart and pæans over the "record" majorities of the card-vote. Will the secular strength of British Capitalism and Conservatism submit without resistance? Will the good sense of the forty millions who are not Unionists accept the lead of the six millions who are? Are the six millions all convinced followers of the eloquent leaders and of the dexterous managers at Congress and Conventions? Do the Labour chiefs feel sure that they can organise a tremendous industrial revolution without its ending in the ghastly ruin of Petrograd and Moscow? For my part I feel doubts. I spoke of "the official and vocal part" of Unionism, for I believe this new claim of Socialism to be the work of a quite moderate minority. I doubt if one-tenth of these six millions are convinced Socialists—or if one-twentieth are convinced Communists—and, after all, Socialism is only a colourable, half-way, unworkable kind of Communism. The prodigious increase in numbers of Unionism has its dark side; for much of it is the result of bullying, boycotting, strikes, anti-social and inhuman tyranny to destroy

personal freedom. These six millions are no more converts to Socialism than are the Russian people converts to Leninism. These mass meetings of miners, railway men, and dockers too often ring with appeals to envy and malice, with false accusations, wild rumours, and a venomous mendacity of the kind made familiar by Soviet Commissars at a massacre of *bourgeois*.

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With all my heart I rejoice in the immense improvement "in the working lives" of our people. All good men and women rejoice in it, bless it, and work for it. But this indispensable material progress, directly due to Unionism, has been soiled by a deep moral and spiritual degeneration of character. In forty years Unionism has become a class-war, degraded by the moral and social evils inevitable in a class-war. The principle of forcing a minority—even a majority—to join an official order is defended by leaders as an essential duty. The cause of the "Trade" as superior to any rights of the public or even of the nation is paraded as if it were a sacred law. The resort to "direct action" as a means of penalising their fellow citizens till they get their money is a social crime. What would they say if doctors, nurses, and undertakers struck work for another 15 per cent.? And when "direct action" or penalising their fellow citizens is used to force the Government to change its foreign policy, it is the Soviet system in full cry. Altogether, Organised Labour stands

charged at the bar of Humanity with a veiled sympathy with the Bolshevik dogma of Labour domination and exclusive mastery of Society, with whatever tends to the violent dissolution of the British Empire, with a friendly indifference to the orgies of plunder and assassination in Ireland. In the United Kingdom, in Europe, in Asia, Africa, or the Empire, the cause of Labour, we are told, is the one thing that counts, or which working men ought to promote.

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The avowed aim of organised Labour now is not to improve "the conditions of employment," but to extinguish Capitalism; and Labour now is absolute master of the Constitution if it chooses to act in concert. The "dictatorship of the proletariat" means the devotion of the national wealth to the interests of the manual labourers. There will be no spare capital in the hands of any upper or middle class to be used for social and charitable purposes; there will be no upper or middle class at all. We need not discuss whether this is a good or a bad result. Many social reformers, as well as the whole order of workmen, look on it as a blessed hope, and I sympathise with that hope myself. But, as soon as it comes about, the vast sums annually given to relieve disease, infirmity, and destitution will have to be found elsewhere. The parrot-cry of State-aid is obviously futile in the ever-growing danger of national bankruptcy as well as of bureaucratic incompetence. The cost of maintaining free hospitals, free homes, any kind of

liberal relief, will have to be met by the workmen themselves out of their societies and clubs. But as yet workmen have not learned the habit of giving. They expect "the Rich" to give, and they want to do away with "the Rich."

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We hear much of the cry of distress that goes up on all sides from the hospitals which are menaced with bankruptcy and dissolution. As yet this cruel end of our great voluntary institutions is heard only from the principal hospitals, which hope to find temporary help. But let us look at this problem in all its tremendous possible breadth. Not only are these splendid fruits of modern civilisation faced with bankruptcy, but all the minor forms of charitable endowments and of social benevolence are in the same peril. That peril is caused by two general and increasing forces which are transforming modern society. The first is the enormous increase of all prices—doubling or trebling the values everywhere. The other is the general and increasing impoverishment of the whole order of property holders. It was this class alone which year by year found the vast sums devoted to all kinds of charitable endowments. And this class is being reduced to extreme pressure and even to penury. If the social revolution designed by Socialism were to succeed, this class would end in extinction.

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As a matter of fact, the world is immensely the poorer. Some fifty or sixty thousand millions

(£60,000,000,000) of wealth has been lost ; and we have wasted at least two or three years of our national income. Nothing can replace this huge deficit but production. And Labour demands are making production impossible.

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By the sudden demand of double and treble wages, by breaking contracts, and defying discipline, Labour is grasping at the exclusive receipt of the whole profits of industry. The result is that capital will not embark on undertakings of which the whole produce is claimed by the manual workers. The enormous wealth invested in railways, mines, and factories is becoming insolvent and unsaleable book-debits, for Labour, dominant in the Commons, refuses to vote the inevitable rise in rates. "Direct action" means the government of this Empire by excited groups of workmen, obviously ignorant of the complications of international politics. It is aiming at what all history proves to have been the worst of all forms of government, when, as at Athens, on the death of Pericles, noisy bands of some thousand of mob orators dragged down their State to ruin.

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Hitherto the bulk of all these "voluntary" endowments has been found by "the upper and lower middle-class"—the *rentiers*—retired people of the educated orders living on invested savings and inherited property. The rich and the speculators, of whose doings the Press takes note, really do no great

part of "the charities." It was done by the millions out of small earnings and "fixed incomes." But the small traders, the hard-worked "professional" men, the *rentiers*—"the new poor"—are doomed to extinction. They can hardly get "a living" as it is. The "profiteering" and the speculation due to the war, which show so large in the public eye, are soon to come to an end. They never did—and never will—do much in charity giving. This henceforth will have to be done by Labour. Labour does not yet realise this. In time, no doubt, it will realise it. But the idea of a workman subscribing his guineas to a Hospital or a Home for Incurables sounds like a jest. Their societies, which deal in hundreds of millions, will do it some day. But till "The Day" of the emancipation of Labour comes there will be cruel times for hospitals and all forms of "good works" of relief to want and misery. No temporary help, no State aid, no petty charge will suffice. Till Labour learns its new duty, the sick, the helpless, and the destitute will be sorely pinched.

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It is not merely the Hospitals and Charities which are menaced with ruin, until the People in the mass undertake their support. The most urgent case of all is that of Ministers of religion of all the different Churches. The celibate Priesthood of the Roman Church, maintained on very modest lines by the continuous gifts of the entire congregation, may struggle on even in these times. The humble and less literate

Ministers of the Free Churches will survive. But the episcopal Church and its clergy have to pass through a cruel time of pressure, in which many of their better aspects, and some of their worse aspects, will be lost. It will be transformed—we trust not extinguished—in the process. The country vicarage and rectory, with their culture, graces, learning, and humanity, will be no more known. Many will rejoice that these outworks of the “landed gentry” will be, with their ancient “patrons,” only a memory of the past. And some, too, will grieve that the courtesy and benevolent help of the parson and the squire, and all the charities and civilities they often worked together will be swept away, when the speculating business man and the popular orator have succeeded to squire and parson. Labour, no doubt, one day, by its wonderful co-operative energy, will supply the village reading-room, dispensary, the games, the holiday-making, and all the spiritual education of the ancient Church of their fathers. But the intervening time before Labour has learned how to replace what it is bent on destroying—this will be a hard time for the old poor as well as for “the new poor.”

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And it is not hospitals, charities, and churches alone that will suffer if the extinction of capitalism and middle-class is achieved by “direct action” securing the mastery of society by workmen. Literature, learning, science, art, and culture have disappeared under Bolshevism, and the essential aim of what to-

day is called Socialism is the prohibition on the accumulation of capital, even of small savings, in the hands of private families. Now, any general view of history, even a biographical dictionary, will show that almost all forms of civilised progress have been bred and nurtured in families where some inherited resources enabled its members to devote their living to study, to thought, to poetry, to art. All these must be *free*. They cannot be produced to the order, or maintained by the allowance, of a workman's club—a Soviet, in fact. We may hope that in a distant future a victorious and cosmopolitan *ergatocracy* will find a means to supply the intellectual, moral, and spiritual needs of modern civilisation, but the passing of capitalism and personal property to communism and the supremacy of organised Labour will be a process both long and somewhat painful to what has presumed to call itself “an upper” and “a middle class.”

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The impulse of the reader no doubt will be to treat all this as an impossible future, and the warning as that of an alarmist. It is quite true that our solid and sensible people are very far from being Leninists, and have no sort of dream of abolishing wages, employers, and capitalism. But the course which organised Labour is taking has the gradual and concealed effect of paralysing and drying up capital. The tumultuous interchange of values, and the sudden blazing up of emergency industries during

the war, coupled with the reckless inundation of paper money, caused conspicuous cases of profiteering wealth, and a general impression of increased spending power. But this impression is a mere illusion, as in Russia, where bank notes pass by the cwt.

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SEPTEMBER

- 1920 -

IX

AT a time of unparalleled confusion in Europe—and in the world—along with complicated problems at home—it is the part of a good citizen to look straight, and to speak straight, if he speak at all. The United Kingdom, the Constitution, the Empire, our foremost place in the nations, were never before in such peril as they are to-day; but the glamour of victory and the show of prosperity blind men's eyes to the perils. At the same time, the unseen menace behind is unknown to the public, and they are amused by a grandiose stage play of cosmopolitan pacification. Why do all these conferences and councils, treaties and compacts, come to nothing, so that the so-called "peace" seems to breed new wars? Why do schemes of reforming the Constitution end in mere debates and essays? Why do treason, rapine, riot, and murder trample on law and government in Ireland? In one word, Britain is still busy with preposterous tasks which it is utterly unable to perform; and still seeks to give political reality to what is only the fading dream of pedantic idealists. On the other hand, these cosmopolitan visions draw off the mind of statesmen and the public from the

urgent need of internal problems. And as to foreign problems as well as Ireland, the public does not see, and the statesmen will not acknowledge, the latent two-fold obstacle which makes action so feeble, so shifty, so futile.

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In this extraordinary crisis of our country it is a duty to speak without reserve. The present writer, entirely detached from any party or Parliamentary interest, whose utterances involve no other's responsibility, may at any rate say what he thinks plainly, without fear or favour, as he has done all his life. The enormous complications of the situation and the multiplicity of incidents and interests make an all-round judgment almost impracticable—yet a one-sided judgment is worse than none at all. If a man has daily read and weighed the news, reports, and statements in several journals of different party colour, all the debates in both Houses, night by night from beginning to end, together with the contents of foreign as well as provincial and Irish journals—even the editorial articles, which at least disclose what the writers either fear or wish to cover up—then he must see in what a welter is the world and our country to-day; and if he comes to any conclusion about policy, he will not do so in ignorance of essential facts. But how very few, even of those who take interest in politics, can pretend to do this! How entirely is all this knowledge shut off from the twenty million men and women who form our democracy and who read

nothing but what some party journal chooses to tell them, or know nothing but what someone else repeats to them! Our people really live in utter ignorance of all essential facts, and yet they claim to settle everything, if not by "direct action," at any rate by a more or less indirect form of political opinion.

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On the face of things, in the fore-front of the press news, comes the execution of the Treaty and the League of Nations, which is fatally bound up with it. Now, all these conferences, councils, agreements, the assemblies, commissions and reports, are empty ceremonials and parades about a thing which has no life—no force in it. A League of Nations, which the United States as yet officially repudiates, which now treats Germany and Russia as its opponents to be feared, which consists of nations each struggling to get what it can for itself, which has no effective force to impose its will, even if its members had common objects—such a League is a mere theatric spectacle to amuse the people. A League of Nations without America is an army in uniform but without any arms. A League of Nations which envy and suspect each other, and have different and incompatible aims, is as futile a combination as would be a universal Church composed of Christians, Jews, Musulmans, and Brahmans. I do not deny that it is a noble and fruitful ideal which in times to come will be realised and have a blessed effect upon civilisation. But to-day it is premature and impossible. I do not doubt that it

inspired with hopes the peoples and the armies during the war, and was sincerely preached and believed in by leading statesmen. If the President had retained the full support of his countrymen, and the statesmen of Europe had been in real control of their respective Governments, perhaps at Christmas, 1918, a practical League of Nations might have been founded.

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The occasion was lost ; the sacred fire of humane aspiration died down, and eight precious months were wasted in disputes about indemnities, protection, formalities, local trifles, and the impossible task of resettling a shattered world. In the meantime the relations of victors and conquered entirely changed ; in each country revolts and discord broke out, largely by the effect of the Covenant itself : chaos, famine, and bankruptcy ensued. Yet still statesmen confer, proclaim, and rush about, in order to carry out formal pledges to which they set their seals at Versailles. To execute to the letter every clause of that farrago of grandiose impracticabilities—whilst at home ruin impends—is the Byzantine folly of discussing the Creed whilst the enemy is at the gates. The urgent thing now is—not to keep the eyes intent on the parchments of Versailles and St. Germain—but to see how the safety, prosperity, and honour of Britain can be secured in the general chaos—which threatens our country with the worst evils it has known in its glorious history.

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There is a cry now to close the Supreme Council and to leave things to the League. Well! but look at realities, and be not misled by all this mystery of the Covenant, Council, and Assembly, subordinate Committees and the rest. They only exist on paper, and piles of reports and recommendations. They have no power to act at all. Strictly speaking, the whole apparatus as yet exists only in draft proposals. There are as yet no mandates at all legally appointed. The only real power is in the hands of the British and French Prime Ministers—with the Italian Minister from time to time called in to form a third. This triumvirate of the victorious Powers, who alone have powerful armies in the field, virtually decide on policy, and summon small Powers to ratify their decisions. They arrange for the execution of the Treaty and they distribute mandates to each other. But all this, to have full legal authority, ought to be submitted to the League and formally voted by it. This has not been done; and the Triumvirate naturally hesitate to submit their policy to a miscellaneous body of minor States which have their own interests to consult. The mandates are only unauthorised proposals of what the principal belligerent Powers would have done. They formally declare that they do not intend annexation, but only wish to help the native people to govern themselves. Unfortunately, the native people now violently protest they do not want help.

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Put aside for a time Treaty and Covenant—at least

put them in the second place. The urgent thing now is the best road to safety and orderly peace for the moment. How is any concert of nations possible if each nation has its own object? The United States, as represented by its President, certainly desired the peace of the world : to be achieved, perhaps, by the " freedom of the seas "—a phrase which covered much. Britain had no imperial aims, though the war threw into its lap enormous material profit. France never did, and does not now, seek anything but her own safety and compensations. Italy aims only at enlarged frontiers and control of the Adriatic and the Levant. The smaller States think only of getting the best safeguards from their neighbours and the largest areas they can obtain. What folly to hope for peace from a parchment League of Nations, when each nation is bent on getting all it can for itself—and Britain is puzzled how to keep and manage what the fortune of war has unexpectedly flung on it, and finds itself the object of envy, suspicion, and hatred because fate has given it a dominant place which it neither looked for nor sought.

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The Covenant and the great Wilsonian League cannot now be rudely dropped; but they can be cherished as a fine ideal and bright hope that must be kept before our eyes with academic theories, but not by practical action. There are plenty of professors, learned legists, and indeed leading M.P.'s—even Ministers—all willing and able to do this. But

statesmen, with urgent dilemmas on their hands, ought to leave Utopias to the men of ideas and devote their whole thoughts to realities and emergencies. The alarming condition of Europe directly concerns our very existence as well as general peace—and so do the restless movements in the East and our Asiatic mandates. Poland, Russia, Germany, Turkey, Syria, Mesopotamia, all bristle with problems as acute as any that ever occupied diplomacy. But there are domestic problems even more acute—Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Constitution of the Empire, our relations with France, with America, the authority of Parliament, the claims of Labour, with incessant demands and threats of "direct action," of nationalisation, the Soviet system, the imminence of increased prices, the paralysis of capital, the growth of taxation, the extreme dilemma of finance. Now, this mountain of tasks is too much for one mind, however powerful and swift.

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I cannot join with attacks on the Prime Minister or his colleagues. I doubt if the country seriously desires to displace them ; and I am sure that if either of the Opposition parties came to power, they would bring us to immediate disaster. But as a critic of Government ought always to be ready with an alternative policy, I venture very humbly as a mere outside bystander, and very respectfully as a well-wisher to Mr. Lloyd George, to suggest that the time has come for him to take the traditional place of a Prime

Minister, *i.e.*, in Parliament ; and that he should make our home problems his first care. There are ten or twenty such problems to deal with—any one of which is big enough to occupy the whole time of a statesman. Parliament is losing all its prestige and efficiency, and is leaving the field of practical work open to the advancing Soviet system. The continual absence of the head of our Government, absorbed in the European tangle, is having a paralysing effect on policy similar to that caused by the illness and the sulking of Mr. Wilson on the policy of the United States. If Parliamentary government is to be maintained, the head of the Government must be continuously in Parliament.

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No doubt there are foreign problems, European, Asiatic, African, which must be handled in some way, under the general direction of the Prime Minister. But for these and for visits abroad, there are competent authorities in the Government. The proper organ for these is the Foreign Secretary, now leader in the House of Lords. Then there is the Colonial Minister, not to mention others. Mr. Balfour seems devoted to the League of Nations, and to-day he should regret both the Italian secret treaty and his patronage of Zion. The Irish rebellion—mainly due, I think, to the delay and indecision caused by the absence and pre-occupation of the Prime Minister, is certainly the most formidable problem of our time—one of the most formidable in the entire history of the

British Empire. Nothing can save it from disaster but genius, courage, and insight, and all these, alone of our public men, the Prime Minister possesses. It will need all his powers, all his time, and it can only be done whilst his personality and his ideas are at work in the midst of his fellow-citizens, and in the House of Commons, where the issue has to be joined.

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In all our history there never was a crisis of such wide extent and of such tremendous consequences. The public and the Press thunder forth incessant advice, for the most part in flat contradiction. No one will listen to any reason that they dislike, nor believe any statement which opposes their views. But there are two very sinister facts underlying all public action, of which the public knows nothing and which the Press thinks it better to ignore. The first is, that our very existence and the success of any policy requires us to maintain close alliance with France and good understanding with America. However much we deprecate policy which France passionately holds to be necessary for her existence, we cannot oppose it, we hardly can remonstrate unless in strict privacy. Whatever international outrages on us are committed by the Press and public men in America, we have to bear them in silence. There are two reasons which force us to consider American opinion as of vital importance. The first is that we owe to U.S.A. a very large debt—more than half our entire income, one-tenth of our whole national debt—

and excited feeling in America might call for its immediate liquidation. The second is that really strong action in Ireland would inflame party passion in America to a point which their statesmen could not control.

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In addition to the underlying risk of inflaming American opinion by asserting government in Ireland is the still more formidable danger of rousing violent opposition from Labour. Any attempt at "vigorous policy," *i.e.*, now military occupation of the island in reality, is met by a storm of protests from all anti-ministerial factions. "Labour" is filled with ignorance, prejudice, and wild battle-cries about Irish oppression, and Labour in its bitter hostility to all conservative policy is more or less supported by what remains of Liberal dogmatism. If the twenty millions of voters who are now impatient and factious were to be united against the one or two millions of real Conservatives, no efficient Government could exist. They who shout out to break Bolshevism, to protect Poland, to save Armenia, to civilise Syria and Mesopotamia—above all to put down Sinn Fein rebels—must be reminded that the effective control of British policy is in the last resort in the hands of an incalculable mass of electors, whose ruling desire is to have no more fighting, no show of militarism at home or abroad, who suspect any tendency to imperial extension, who still hold on to obsolete formulas about the oppression of Ireland by Britain—and who in the

main close their minds down on anything which seems to delay the promise of the universal reign of Labour and its inheritance of the effete dominion of Capital.

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Where is the Covenant now? What is the League of Nations doing now? The fifteen or more signatories drop out one by one: the remainder have conflicting interests and are powerless to act, even if they were agreed in any common policy. Of the Big Four, America withdrew a year ago. As to Italy, she all but fought with Greece over their respective shares of the spoil of Austria and Turkey. Desperate efforts have been made to keep England and France together—even cruel sacrifices and constant differences—for it is a matter of life and death to both of us. We had to suffer France to overrun Syria and to break our engagements with the Arab chiefs—to abandon Armenians in Cilicia—to prepare an era of unrest and insurrection from the Taurus to the Persian Gulf. Again, we had to allow France, or some French influence, to push the Poles on to engage the Russian nation, to hamper us in all our attempts to make peace with Russia, and now France formally declares what is in effect war with the *de facto* Government of Russia. Alas! The dominant idea of French politicians is to found Poland as an Eastern curb on German ambition, and to get some return of the enormous sums once lavished in Russian loans. Futile and dangerous delusions—which Britain dares not actively oppose.

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This cosmopolitan chaos has re-acted at home with revolutionary violence. The Government, Parliamentary institutions, the constitution, industry, our social economy, have been shaken to their foundations. In January, 1918, I wrote—"the war of Nations is being entangled with, is merging into, the war of Class, and essentially, between those who hold capital and those who work with their hands." The Bolshevik revolution sent "a thrill through the masses such as the world has never yet known"—"there is coming over civilisation a change even more enormous than the war"—"there will be a wholly new social order." (*Obiter Scripta.* Pp. 1, 2, 3.) And now this has come about, mainly in consequence of social chaos which the war caused and by the extravagant Utopias hatched in Washington and acclaimed in Europe as a new gospel.

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As the head of the British Government has been absorbed in continental politics and rarely present in Parliament, succeeding indeed to that "dictatorship of the Nationalities" which Mr. Wilson enjoyed on his first visit to Europe, organised and unorganised Labour formed Soviets which put themselves into direct relations with the Government, treated themselves as the real Opposition, and forced their own views with menaces that were by no means negligible or empty. Government no longer deals with the remnants of the old conventional parties. It has to deal with vast Trade Soviets and rebel groups, which

regard the House of Commons as an effete anachronism. Consciously or unconsciously, the Government, threatened daily not only with its very existence but with the social chaos of industrial revolt, acquiesces in the "new social order," leaves the constitution impotent, and practically inaugurates the Soviet system. Are we about to recognise the Russian Soviet autocracy and to see at home the dictatorship of our domestic proletariat?

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It is now clear that Lenin and Trotsky, and the miscreants who have seized power in Russia and plundered its treasures, are working to ruin this bourgeois kingdom and destroy the Empire. No one can doubt that widespread Bolshevik conspiracies to defy true democratic opinion, and to break up the Constitution by treasonable violence, are in full swing in England, Scotland, and probably in Ireland, as well as in the Near East and the Far East. What is called the "extreme wing of organised Labour" is plainly Bolshevik, is an outlying force of the Bolshevik host. Now, the pressing question to-day is this—are the promoters and members of these "Councils of Action," of the "direct action" committees, in alliance, or in sympathy, with these British Bolsheviks? Are the Labour M.P.'s, honourable and right honourable, is the Labour Party, as a body, in league with this British Bolshevism? If the official Labour Party does not approve of and encourage such treason, why does it not disavow it?

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Our country, the Empire, and our constitutional Government are now being attacked by a Russian enemy in league with treason at home, just as truly as in 1914 it was being attacked by the Kaiser and his spies and agents here. How is it possible to enter into regular relations and amity with a Government of that kind? Not only do its ministers and agents preach the most deadly enmity to our country, but it is proved by a series of events that there is no crime, no trick, no fraud which they are not ready to practise in pursuit of their schemes. Contracts, agreements, promises of theirs are worth no more than the lies of card-sharpers on a racecourse, or of burglars and assassins in a thieves' kitchen. If private citizens choose to do business with Russian merchants, let them be free to do it at their own risk. But it would be dangerous and discreditable for any British public authority to come to official terms with any agents of a gang of tyrants who are carrying on a secret, but deadly, war with our country, and who publicly avow that any arrangements they may make are only intended to delude their opponents. Agents of such a Power ought to be summarily dismissed—if, indeed, they are not arrested as spies.

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We have come now to the parting of the ways. Trade Unionism, which has a fine history of at least seventy years of constant increase in power, which has given untold and incalculable benefits not only to the labouring masses, but to society as a whole—is it, or is

it not, the ally, or if not, at least the friend, of a fanatical enemy of our country which is working by revolution to destroy our society and reduce the kingdom to anarchy and civil war? If Trade Union members, who are said to number six millions, do not mean this, the time has come for them to show themselves against it. If the official leaders of the Labour Party, who speak with voices so different at Westminster from what they utter on platforms, do not favour Bolshevik intrigues, they must show it by deeds as well as words. Are these new "Councils of Action" going to be Bolshevism under a disguise? Is "direct action" another name for civil war?

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The confusion in Europe, in Asia, at home, increases every day, and I take up my pen again to express my anxieties for the future with more precision. I have been "meliorist" if not optimist all my life, and by every conviction and experience I am inclined to believe in ultimate progress and also in the essential good sense of the popular judgment. But there comes a time when our good hopes are destined to mislead us and when the popular judgment is under spasmodic excitement. Such a time is this from two overwhelming causes. The first is the abysmal overturn of ideas, habits, and conditions caused by the world-war, which shook to its bases every nation, class, and government, inducing a general belief that all had to be reconstructed *de novo*. The second is that the necessities of war involved the direct appeal to

organised Labour in all its forms, whilst the sudden and enormous increase in the electorate took the ultimate control of the Kingdom and the Empire away from those who had some experience and knowledge of political problems and handed it over to those who had no knowledge or experience at all. The result of an electric atmosphere among men and a vast change of power into new hands has produced a silent, unobserved but radical revision of the British Constitution. We are coming under a Soviet system.

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It is usual to charge this upon the present Government, and especially on the Prime Minister; and it cannot be denied that they have done much to produce this change, or at least to accept or submit to it. But they are not at all the authors of the change, nor are they responsible for it, inasmuch as it was forced on them by the condition of things and by our new ultra-democratic electoral system. The antiquated administrative and parliamentary machinery of our Constitution is utterly unsuited both to states of war and of revolution. And we are slow to recognise that for most social, economic and governing purposes the state of war and of revolution practically continues still. Our electoral system is at present the most ultra-democratic in the world—nothing remains but to give votes to boys and girls at school. Neither France nor the United States have anything like such an electorate. France and the United States each have a very effective Senate. We have none, but a

pageant under sentence of being scrapped. France and the United States each has a written Constitution —both of them in my opinion superior to our own. Ours is a fluid or elastic body of statutes, practices and traditions which the mob orators say may easily have the Soviet system engrafted on to it, may indeed be superseded by the Soviet system.

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A new Constitution could be voted in a few nights by a bare majority of the House, elected by twenty millions of men and women utterly unversed in political problems. On the other hand, the industrial workers are organised in Great Britain with a strength and a discipline far greater than the workers of America, France, or Germany. British Trade Unions possess wealth, cohesion, and opportunities beyond any industrial societies in the world. They are, indeed, far the most powerful social force in the country. Any British Government, dependent night by night on a simple vote of a single House, is forced to attend to the claims of these tremendous trade armies, and whenever these are agreed among themselves a Government has to yield with more or less decent show of qualification or resistance. The instinct of the Prime Minister always recognises real forces.

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We are so much accustomed to look on our old institutions as eternal, so little given to follow any-

thing to its logical consequences, that the ordinary man treats with a smile contingencies which he thinks to be far too tremendous to be possible. He thought the same of the war in July, 1914, and of the rule of Lenin and Trotsky down to 1919. The average citizen in easy circumstances will not see that an entirely new social atmosphere has been created on the habitable globe, as if from pole to pole it was overcharged with electric cycles. Such new ideas, hopes, courage, and ambition have never been infused into thousands of millions of men and women in such mass and over such range of area and clime. I am not one to regret or complain of all this rejuvenescence of humanity. But I do say, Recognise its reality, and understand its force. Do not think that all is well—all is as before—all will come right. No! not if we all rest on our old ways and shut our eyes to the new spirit. They say that in Ireland business, amusement, life, and pleasure seem to thrive outwardly without a check or a blot, but assassination, treason, insurrection, and conspiracy work incessantly beneath the outward show of peace, order, and prosperity. Something of the kind may be going on here also.

OCTOBER

- 1920 -

X

THE *Life of Lord Courtney*, by Mr. G. P. Gooch (Macmillan and Co., 1920), is at once a faithful portrait of an eminent public man and an invaluable contribution to the political history of our time. My own close relations with Leonard Courtney lasted for exactly sixty years, and I was keenly engaged with many of the causes and movements to which he devoted his life. We had common friends, often wrote in the same organs of public opinion, and at times stood on the same platforms. Now and then I warmly supported and followed his lead : and again I engaged in vehement opposition to his chosen causes. No man of our time took a nobler part in resisting the reckless imperialism which led to incessant wars in India, in Egypt, in South Africa ; and in all these I and my friends were proud to regard him as their trusted chief. On the other hand, his dogmatic creed of self-help, of proportional representation, of woman's suffrage, and of pacifism was alien to all my deepest beliefs. At the root of our two minds there was an ingrained antagonism between Courtney's individualism and our ideal of social humanity. Thus it is that with a truly impartial judg-

ment I offer my tribute to his public career as that of a great citizen whose courage, tenacity, and lofty spirit did honour to the highest traditions of English public life. His life from first to last, of which this book is a faithful record, is a story of devotion to patriotism, honour, good faith, and an almost romantic spirit of personal sacrifice.

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The point in this story which specially interests me is this. Here is a man of great powers, acknowledged to be of eminent public service, who continually refuses office, even of the most tempting sort, who is constantly rejected and fails in his aims, solely because of his stern independence of mind, and his stoical resolve to suffer none of his convictions to be sacrificed to party. He refuses office in which he would be specially useful, he votes against his party, he resigns his place in the Government, he makes it impossible to enter a Cabinet, and he passes the last eighteen years of his public life as a wholly independent critic of Government outside of all party connections. This was because nothing could tempt him to yield a jot of his cherished principles, even to place himself where he would be unable publicly to assert them. I need not say how highly I honour such steadfastness, worthy of an Aristides or a Cato, how much I value such outspoken courage in our public life. But the moral I draw is this—that the true place for such independence is outside of Parliament, free from all party ties, devoid of all ambition for office. It is of the best

interests of the nation that it should have such absolutely free and brave politicians and critics. But they must stand aloof from party and from office: their strength lies in *opinion*, not in force. They have to touch the conscience, not to make laws: they must keep clear of the party discipline. As was the case of Mill—even of Burke—the chief part of Courtney's public service was done outside the bounds of party and office. Would that all could see how impossible it is to serve both ideal convictions and official place.

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Mr. Gooch's book gives us a faithful record of Lord Courtney's public career; but it is not at all limited to that, for to a great extent it is the history of the political world in which Courtney took part during more than half a century. As a strict biography of a politician, this so far detracts from the life-like portrait of a personality—all the more that Courtney himself had a very minor action on the policy which he so often criticised and sought to influence. In literary vivacity, therefore, this very industrious and accurate memoir is far from a success. There is too much about humdrum Parliamentary tactics and forgotten and forgetable personalities. And this also detracted from the biography of Sir Charles Dilke. The heroic standard of Courtney's principles is too often obscured by tiresome details from persons whom he did not convince, and who certainly never convinced him. In this volume there are printed, more or less in full, no less than seventy-eight letters from

others, many of them trivial, complimentary, and outside his proper work. Very few of these letters have any literary value, nor are Courtney's own letters specially distinguished in form. All those House of Commons tactics and friendly courtesies extend the bulk and dim the vivid impression of a man of rare virtue and power, though they will be most useful some day to the historian of the Victorian age.

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A new history of philosophy by the Cambridge Professor of Moral Philosophy cannot but attract students of modern thought, and they will turn with great expectations to the *History of English Philosophy*, by W. R. Sorley, Litt.D., etc. (University Press, 8vo., 1920). My own expectations, I confess, have not been entirely satisfied. The field of the inquiry is too limited in area, in time, in language. The method of the inquiry seeks rather to state dates, facts, and schools, and to give short summaries of numerous writings, rather than to expound definite judgment on the value of each school and philosopher in aiding in the evolution of thought. Again, the enumeration of an immense number of different theories leaves the reader waiting to be informed what in the author's judgment is the essential outcome of this mass of learning, and, above all, what is the author's own point of view in philosophy. He tabulates with great industry and precision the doctrines of some hundred and twenty philosophers, who for the most part differ widely from each other, but we do not

see with which of them he concurs and how he would class himself. The Chronological Tables and the bibliography occupy no less than seventy pages, and extend from A.D. 1516 to 1918. Out of this vast library of learning, in what solid body of truth has Professor Sorley himself found salvation and offers us as sound reality?

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The field of the inquiry is too limited in time. It practically starts with Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* in 1605. The result of this is to reduce to bare mention the philosophers of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance from Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century down to William Gilbert in the sixteenth century. But Roger Bacon is surely one of the greatest of English philosophers, the peer of Francis Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, and Hume. But Roger, Duns Scotus, and Ockham are hurried over with a page, or half a page, whilst Henry More has ten pages and Bentham has twenty pages. Surely, too, Gilbert is of prime importance in any history of English philosophy, yet he is reduced to a perfunctory single page, apparently because he wrote in Latin. Why should a history of philosophy be limited to the English language? This limitation points to a serious defect in the professor's method. Gilbert, like Roger Bacon, as did Descartes and at times Francis Bacon, wrote in Latin, because their whole work was associated with, and was addressed to, European thinkers, not to those of their own nation. That English

philosophy only began in 1600, and ended in 1900, is a double misconception, as is the assumption that it appeals only to those who read our language. Philosophy has no limit of age, of language, or of race. To confine it to nationality, century, or literary form is radically to disfigure it.

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The initial mistake was to undertake a history of *English* philosophy. There is not, and there never has been, any truly English philosophy, nor English science, nor English astronomy or physics. All the higher developments of knowledge and research are not only European, but now are cosmopolitan. And this is especially true of the crown of all knowledge in philosophy. Our own philosophy did not begin with the first book in English, and it did not end with the reign of Victoria. And why *English* rather than British philosophy, seeing that large chapters are devoted to Hume, Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, Dugald Stewart, Sir William Hamilton, and the recent Scottish school. The author, himself a distinguished Scot of eminent Scottish academies, seems inclined to the recent phase of Northern philosophy which in the twenty years since Victoria has given us such an abundance of critical, if not of original, philosophy. It seems odd that so distinguished a member of that race and school should open his history of philosophy with an English book, should entitle the study a history of *English* philosophy, and should close it with the end of an English sovereign. As was

said of a lady's costume, *il commence trop tard, et il finit trop tôt.*

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The book will be very useful to students, especially to those who are being crammed for examinations, for it gives the dates, chief works, and a summary of the views of one hundred and twenty English philosophers, of whom few undergraduates know the names, and of whose views they may very well remain ignorant. The so-called "history" is, in fact, a catalogue or summary of works on philosophy published in English between 1600 and 1900; but it is not a weighty estimate of the permanent result of the thinkers named. Indeed, a work purporting to deal with the dominant ideas of three centuries, but which said little or nothing about French, German, and Italian thought in those ages, their influence upon British thought, and the reaction of British thought on them, nothing of Descartes, Leibnitz, Diderot, Kant, Hegel, and practically nothing of the influence abroad of Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Bentham, and Mill—such a work loses sight of the very central idea of philosophy. The French, the German, and the American text-books do this. The now-forgotten history of philosophy of G. H. Lewes (1880) did this. Such a book as that of Mr. Archibald Alexander (1907), which in 600 pages treated philosophy from Thales to Thomas H. Green, did this. But the Moral Professor in Cambridge avoids this indispensable task.

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A new translation of the *Agamemnon* always gives me the occasion to re-read the drama which I have long held to be the grandest of all tragedies in any language or age. And now Professor Gilbert Murray has published his version, in rhyming verse with notes (G. Allen and Unwin, cr. 8vo., pp. 91). The Preface, Stage-directions, analyses of the Chorus, and Notes are most valuable aids to the English reader, and in every sense worthy of Dr. Murray's high office and great reputation. The version of the Greek original may hold its own with the well-known translations in prose or verse by Dr. Verrall, 1889, and of Mr. Morshead, 1899; and where Dr. Murray differs from them, perhaps scholars will prefer to follow him. The volume altogether will be of real help to the student of *Æschylus*; and it will certainly have the same vogue as Dr. Murray's translations of Euripides and of the *Oedipus* and *Frogs*. As a metrical translation of the most tremendous of all tragedies, it has to compete with an immense number of others—the London Library alone has more than twenty. Two famous poets have made egregious failures. Browning's is queer and uncouth; Fitzgerald's is mere "variations" on the sacred text of *Æschylus*.

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I doubt if Dr. Murray's method suits *Æschylus* as well as it suits Euripides. It is too modern, vernacular, and Browningesque at times to fit the Pheidian, Biblical majesty of the *Oresteia*. Rhyme is out of place in the mighty declamation of these iambics; and

in the Stichomuthia, or “capping” of alternate lines—always a doubtful device to us—the rhyming is almost comic. The perpetual use of “God” for “the gods,” and even “Fore God,” jars on my ear; and there are too many daring new compounds like “Ghastly-wed,” “Gold-changer,” “bird-throated,” “third-thrower.” It is risky to imitate the poet’s new mint; but I admit that “Hell in cities, Hell in ships” for the famous ἐλένας ἐλέπτολις is a daring and successful stroke, from which Milman admits that he shrank. Altogether Dr. Murray’s work is an honour to Oxford scholarship; but a verse translation of a sublime poet should be poetry. And for my part I cannot part with my Dean Milman which I have enjoyed for fifty-five years. Milman was himself a poet, albeit of early Victorian type. His Translation of the *Agamemnon* and of the *Bacchanals* and numerous Greek lyrics (John Murray, illustrated, 1865) is, to my mind, a rare introduction to Greek poetry. And his version of the *Agamemnon*, if less scholarly, is more like the spirit of Greek poetry than any of those by recent hands.

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One of the most striking facts of our time is the incessant efforts that are made to bring about some religious harmony—even a union of various Churches. Things are being done by ministers, clergy, and even prelates, which would have been thought intolerable down to the close of the Victorian era. And the purely secular Press has opened its columns to debates

and controversies as to church membership and the need of development in religion. There is ample ground to account for all this. The war shook all the conditions of life over the whole globe with a disturbing force greater than any experienced by the life of man. The habitable world from the Alaskan promontory to the Indian Ocean was drawn into the vortex. At the same time the relations of social order and industrial discipline were stirred to their foundations. The essential unity of humanity was revealed as it had never before been made so manifest. And the universal uprooting of society drove men to ask the question—if religion could not do something to find an eirenicon of mankind.

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To the man-in-the-street, to common sense—certainly to the agnostic—it would seem that all these efforts have been futile. As a keen-sighted dignitary of the Church reminds them, what hope of union of Protestant churches is there if prelates insist on Episcopacy and the antique Creed? It is as if purposely meant to exclude all Presbyterians, all Unitarians, as well as the vast body of religious persons who would call themselves Christians, but would not submit to have their faith limited by any dogmatic creed, whether ancient or modern. And what glimmer of union is there between any Protestant communion and one of which the essence is the miracle of the real presence and the sanctification of the priest as the miracle-worker? To common sense it would

seem that no reunion of Christians can advance a step whilst there is no real agreement as to the source and authority of the Scriptures, as to the definite meaning of the Creed, and especially as to the nature of Christ, and the truth of His birth, life and death. It is no use to talk about Christian reunion if you are willing to leave all this in the air.

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If prelates and theologians are too rigid in their conditions of religious union, there are many able and excellent leaders of thought whose ideas of religion are noble in spirit but intellectually vague. I was attracted to a new volume by Dr. Bosanquet, a very distinguished philosopher and moralist. *What Religion Is* (Macmillan and Co., 1920, sm. 8vo., pp. 81) is a beautiful book, with almost all of which I should feel in sympathy, if I were to vary a few names and phrases. But my difficulty is to understand what exactly, in plain words, the writer means. In his opening sentence he raises what he so finely calls "the S.O.S. of humanity"—"what must I do to be saved?" The answer seems to be—You are saved if you have religion. True!—but what religion? Something that you hold as supreme! Yes! but what is that? It is as much as to say—You are saved if you have *X*. This indefinable *X* runs through the whole book. "In the unity of love and will with the supreme good you are saved—you are free and you are strong." But what is the supreme good and how am I to reach it? "Be a whole, or join a whole." This,

he says, *is religion*. “ We must not let go our main grasp of the *values*—love, beauty, truth.” But that is what all who reason about religion have said from St. Paul to Auguste Comte. The formula would cover the Pope, General Booth, the Chief Rabbi, the Sheikh-ul-Islam and a Chinese Mandarin. As Aristotle said of Plato: “ It is beautiful, but is it practical? ”

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Heartily accepting this formula of Dr. Bosanquet, our own faith, as I have often tried to explain, is this. The business of religion is not so much to tell men what goes on in Heaven, and how to get there when we leave this earth—but rather to tell men how to do their duty whilst they are here: and what the brotherhood of man really requires them to do one to another. Unhappily, all forms of Protestant Christianity are far too “ spiritual ” to do anything of this kind. Heaven, not earth, is their sphere. Rome at times does something, too often on the wrong side, in the wrong way. The Catholic Church once did much; and so did some Protestant churches in the day of their power. But to-day they are silent, and protest that their sacred office has nothing to do with things social, industrial, political, or national. So say Baptists, Unitarians, Churchmen, and Romanists, at least in England, for they fear that their congregations would disappear if they presumed to meddle with mundane things. So they talk of nothing but Heaven, whilst the masses are ever less interested in it as a matter of

vital concern. There will be no real peace on earth until there is promise of a common religion based on scientific certainties which all can accept, and training men from childhood to practise that personal and social conduct in life which is at once their duty and their true happiness.

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An amazing example of the way in which Obscurantism lifts its old head at any new step taken in the progress of science is to be seen in the eagerness of metaphysico-theology to make a hit out of the novel Einstein theory of physics. The famous professor has proposed a new development to the geometric conditions of the world, which so far high scientific authority and recent observations seem to justify. Thereupon certain mystics in what they call philosophy and theology cry out : See how rotten and treacherous a foundation is your boasted science ! Since Euclid, Newton, and Darwin were all wrong, let us return again to our sublime and antique fancies, and put no trust in their pretended scientific certainties. Long ago Mr. Arthur J. Balfour started this red-herring across the chase of Truth ; which I then described as " sub-cynical pessimism," " a kind of despairing quietism." Serious men of science never imagined their knowledge to be complete or final, even in their own special branch, and have always been willing to hail novel improvements and corrections. Like Newton, they knew they were only picking up solid fragments on the shore of a bound-

less sea. But it is a comical form of muddle-headedness which fancies the discovery of a new shell or an unknown bit of rock proves all that has yet been gathered in to be worthless.

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Dr. Einstein himself has now given to the English reader his own account of his theory in what he calls the simplest form—*Relativity, A Popular Exposition*, translated by Dr. R. Lawson (Methuen and Co., 12mo., pp. 138). Now, “the average reader,” so addressed, will not be able to master this learned book unless he is fairly familiar with recent physics, and especially the modern development of the geometry of four dimensions. In the next place, let the average reader be reassured that the new doctrine of relativity concerns those who work *inter apices* on the ultimate problems of geometry and astronomy. The Euclid of the schools and the solar system of ordinary text-books remain untouched. Euclid deals with the measurement of objects on this globe, by men. The Newton of academic examinations explains the diurnal and annual rotations of the planets and the physics of our solar system. Neither Euclid nor Newton ever laid down final, absolute, and ultimate laws of the universe. If anyone supposed that Newton did this, Dr. Einstein tells them they were premature, and that Relativity goes a long way farther than they dreamed. Professor Eddington, the Astronomer-Royal, and some of our highest authorities, have now explained the Einstein doctrine

and are willing to accept it, though it is still waiting demonstration by final tests. But to assume that this is to knock the bottom out of science is indeed childish superstition.

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I have done my best to follow Dr. Einstein's new book and the various expositions it has called forth. And I will only say that the extension therein given to the doctrine of Relativity causes me no difficulty to accept, for I have been a firm believer in an extreme form of Relativity all my life. Even at Oxford I never could bring my mind to believe in any Absolute Reality outside my personal consciousness, however high the probability that our scientific knowledge was correct in fact. I have never known any limit to Relativity, *i.e.* to the truth of things being true, *so far only as human powers and conditions admit*. Accordingly, I hail Dr. Einstein's enlarged Relativity of Time and Space, which to me have always been mere working forms of the human understanding. But when, in Part III., pp. 105-114, he determines the structure of Space *in se*, and denies that "the stellar universe is a finite island in the infinite ocean of space," but postulates a finite universe, he is going too far. Geometry may prove this in a fourth dimension, *i.e.* a non-human world. But a geometer has no right to dogmatise about the universe by what are merely *X Y Z* theories on paper. All these tables are not *geometry*, *i.e.* the measuring of real things, but they are algebraic conundrums, which may have

no real existence outside the brain of the calculator. Dr. Einstein is more geometrician than philosopher. Relative philosophy will recall him to earth by reminding him that it is an unverified assumption that *his* idea of Space and Time, *his* ratios, and *his* figures rule throughout the universe. Dr. Einstein's new Relativity may be an unanswerable *tour-de-force* in supergeometry, but it has no right to pose as Relative Philosophy. There may be not only a fourth, but an *n*th geometry in the universe, or the universe may be a figment of his own imagination. True Relativity rejects all forms of the Absolute.

NOVEMBER

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XI

THE establishment of a statesman of tried authority in the French Republic is a happy omen for the peace of Europe and for the union of our two great nations. On that union the future of civilisation is staked. At first sight, it might be thought that nothing of great importance had been effected by the transfer of M. Millerand from the office of Prime Minister to that of President of the Republic. Those who know France have seen that the change is of deep significance. M. Millerand does not accede to the Elysée as a courtly figurehead and judicious Chairman of Cabinets, but as the masterful chief of a great people who receive him as their guide and inspirer. He himself declared that he would accept office only on those conditions. He even suggested that he hoped to see amendments in the Constitution. But the Constitution already offers to an able President an authority greater than that of a British Prime Minister and greater than that of a President of the United States. Our Prime Ministers, we know, can be dismissed by the sudden vote of a very small majority of a single Chamber, and at times they have been hampered by the silent influence

of the Crown. The American President (elected for four years only) can be absolutely checkmated by a Congress which he cannot dissolve and a Senate which has almost equal authority in foreign affairs.

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M. Millerand is now irremovable President of France for seven years. His position is quite different from what it was when he was Prime Minister and had to defend his every act with opponents in the Chambers and could be overthrown by a single vote. He has himself declared that he claims the right to conduct negotiations with allies. He has legal authority to do much which Woodrow Wilson attempted to do, but which the American Constitution proves to be *ultra vires*. No doubt the French President can be held up by the entire Parliament acting together. He is no dictator, but a constitutional Minister. But M. Millerand has gifts to lead Parliament which no President since Thiers ever has had. He has a much longer term of office than an American President. He cannot be dismissed in a night sitting as a British Prime Minister may be. He ascends to his high office with all the prestige of a great Parliamentary leader, yet he has no authority above him to represent the nation. Like an American President, he is irremovable, and for a term practically double. And yet, as Chairman of a real Parliamentary Cabinet, he can take active and continuous part in Parliamentary legislation with a freedom which no American President can exert. He is

the first French President since Thiers who has succeeded to that office with an immense majority in the Chamber.

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The opinion of those who know France best long ago convinced me that a strictly Parliamentary Executive on the British lines is unworkable in that country, and that a Presidential Executive—neither party leader nor dictator—is best suited to the genius and traditions of the Republic. The vast mass of rural citizens, at last disillusioned of an Empire, have always been opposed to the faction-fights in the Chamber at Paris. Their ideal is stable Republican Government. Internecine Parliamentary cabals have ever been the grave of French statesmen. Socially speaking, and for maintenance of the institutions of order and of property, the French people are more settled—more conservative—than either the British or the American people. There is in France a more steady horror of ochlocracy and communism than in any Anglo-Saxon race. The recent Socialist Congress at Orleans showed how organised Labour in France, constituted as it is on Socialist lines, by a crushing majority repudiated the Bolshevik Communism and its tyranny ; whilst neither British nor American Socialism, much less German and Italian Socialism, have taken any such emphatic step. The social system of France—still mainly a self-supporting and industrial peasantry—is more stable than the social system of Britain and America—where gigan-

tic industrial enlargement fills the mind of capitalist and workmen with perpetual visions of a new world.

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A real statesman in the position of an irremovable President, who is also the effective chief of his own Cabinet, through whom he is in daily touch with Parliament, is far more able to effect his own policy, if he keeps it resolutely in his mind, than is an American President or a British Prime Minister. Our Minister has to be continually hedging and compromising and altering his plans as the House seems to sway backwards and forwards; and often he is forced to show the whole of his hand prematurely, or meet rude and stormy insults. An American President is not in regular touch with Congress, and what he calls his Cabinet is not a true Parliamentary Cabinet in our sense. A French President is, or rather may be, in a position which shares some of the advantages of a British Prime Minister in that he is never at arms' length with Parliament, and also he has the great strength of the American President in that he is irremovable by direct vote. Now M. Millerand has all the opportunities of using both advantages—and I confidently look for a new and stable Government in France more conservative in spirit and more effective in international peace.

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M. Millerand and Mr. Lloyd George have worked together with rare comradeship, and we trust that this common *entente* may continue and increase. But the difficulties to be overcome are deep seated. Union between England and France forms the very condition of the welfare of both. But there are inherent differences in our interests and mental habits. France in her heroic struggle has been all but bled to death. Her chief industrial district has been ruined for a generation. Her deadly enemy has even still larger material resources and a population almost double; and there are no strategic barriers between them. France adopted the Wilson programme enthusiastically whilst it seemed to mean a powerful protector and, in the extinct triple Treaty, a perfectly efficient safeguard. But she never had any illusions about a world-peace and an omnipotent League to restore civilisation, such as was the honest dream of the English people and Government. France was far too miserable about her wounds and her defenceless state to indulge in visions about general civilisation. When Wilson withdrew, and took with him the abortive triple guarantee, France could see nothing but her own almost desperate isolation—the need of indemnities and new provinces. How was she to get money, coal, Eastern allies, and security in the Mediterranean? Her one hope was—gold, Poland, Asia Minor, Syria, restored mines, manufactures, allies, and more coloured troops. All else might go to ruin its own way. All that was very natural in a people faced with the imminent peril of

their beloved France. But it was not the British way, and not the way to European peace.

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Frenchmen have two qualities in rare perfection—a logical perspicacity to follow out reasoning to its full consequences, together with an incurable tendency to suspect motives and aims of friends and foes. Now the English mind is much slower to detect danger, desertion, or treachery; and is averse to pressing every point to its logical sequence. The Frenchman takes up his *data* and follows them up to the end *coûte que coûte*. Now the English mind, when it finds reasoning come to startling results, begins to hark back and think there was something doubtful in the *data* from which he started. He says things have altered, what was true at first is no longer true. He begins again from fresh *premissa*—he is an opportunist by habit and from experience. The Frenchman turns round and accuses him of treachery, of vacillation and ill-will—*perfidie Albion!* This accounts for many things in recent disputes. French and English Ministers agreed with Wilson's schemes to re-settle Europe, to make Germany pay, and to put her in chains. Englishmen, in a year or two, began to see that Germany could not pay all—and that to put her in chains was to make it impossible that she could pay at all. They began to see that Poland was a very poor substitute to France for Tsardom Russia, and that Soviet Russia would not and could not pay the Tsardom debts. They saw that France could not hold Cilicia and had

no real hold on Syria. Frenchmen heard all this with rage and suspicion. What! Germany is not to pay, nor Russia! Poland no good! Syria a failure! What is to become of France then?

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England and France must hold together—or both will fall. But the difficulties of joint action are great. Our nation is, above all things, practical—ready to see that conditions are changed, that new plans must be formed. And our Governments are more completely and continuously under the direction of Parliament and of opinion than is usually the Government of France. But the French people and their rulers, with the passionate will of their race and their exact and scientific mind, vehemently insist on literal execution of every agreement and precise adherence to every clause of a common policy. To differ from their view is to desert them—to see new conditions is to side with their enemy. All this makes co-operation extraordinarily difficult. It is impossible for us to join in all the schemes on which France has set her heart—and yet we cannot actively oppose them. We will, and we must, press Germany to make good her reparation in all reasonable measure; but we cannot join France in fresh military invasion of German land. We know how futile are hopes of any Russian Government recognising outstanding liabilities—how vain is the refusal to trade until this is done. We know how precarious is the hold of any Christian Power on any Asiatic littoral. And we know how

precarious and how intractable is the new-born Polish nation. Yet we cannot formally resist the French *entêtement* for these schemes. As a matter of fact, we are powerless to take any adequate part in any of them. With Constantinople, Palestine, Mesopotamia, India, Ireland, all in military occupation, we have not a man to spare. Finally, the democracy at home places an absolute bar on any fresh commitments of a warlike kind. On the contrary, it is loudly calling out for a great reduction of those we have.

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The result is that everything connected with the Covenant must be counted at present as secondary, and our first and urgent care must be the home interest of the United Kingdom—and, indeed, of the entire Realm overseas. Circumstances now force us to take up much the same position as that of the American people. They cry—as practically did both Conventions—America first! France too cries—France first! rather, indeed, *La France quand même!* That is a cry which we cannot share, but which we cannot defy. It will require infinite diplomatic adroitness to avoid being entangled in desperate adventures which our reason opposes and our people condemn, and yet to avoid the charge of deserting our ally. One way of cementing alliance would be to reduce at least by one-half—even by two-thirds—the monstrous profit we make by the price of indispensable coal to our friends. Sorely as we need the gain, our financial position is greatly better than that of

Italy or France. For my part, I would practically sell coal at cost price, and, indeed, I would cancel the sums advanced on loan. A second way of clearing up all grounds of estrangement would be frank and complete publicity for all facts and intentions. We have suffered all through the war by secret policy and by withholding adequate explanation of our own case. France, Italy, America have never had true understanding of what is our actual condition and what are our real aims. There is a conventional bar on a British Government defending itself until it is formally attacked in Parliament. The "English gentleman's" pride is to treat all abuse with contemptuous silence. And yet we now know the incalculable power of active and skilful *propaganda*. It is time for a British Government to force upon all the real facts and its own determined policy.

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The burning problem of Nationalisation has been ably treated by a great succession of the leading statesmen, economists, capitalists, Socialists, and workers, from almost every point of view and with a variety of different experiences; and it has been my business to study them, whether supporting or opposed to the scheme. But of all that I have seen none seem to me so convincing as the essay of Lord Emmott.¹ In some 78 massive pages Lord Emmott

¹ *Nationalisation of Industries*.—A criticism, by Lord Emmott. T. Fisher Unwin, Limited, 2s.

has examined the entire case for nationalising industries; generally, or in mines, railways, transport, and land. It is done with rare lucidity and judicial impartiality, shirking no aspect of the problem, and examining each scheme in detail. He combines in himself many qualifications for wise judgment—a trained economist, an experienced statesman, an eminent financial authority, an old official in both Houses, a great industrial chief, and an ardent Liberal. As might be expected of a public man of such wide range of interests, the whole essay is composed with scrupulous moderation, entire fairness, and the weight of judicial decision.

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Lord Emmott begins with a thorough and truly Liberal examination of the causes of Industrial Unrest. He shows that nationalisation of *all* industry is mere tyranny—as the Bolshevik experiment proves—because universal and real Communism, being in incessant conflict with the acquisitive instincts of human nature, can only be maintained by ruthless universal coercion. This English and French Socialist leaders have at last come to see. Lord Emmott then passes on to examine the organisation of nationalisation, as proposed in various schemes. He proves that the virus of coercion must rule in any type of nationalisation, and that any form of coercion of any industry necessarily implies bureaucracy. It is futile for Labour leaders to repudiate bureaucracy in words if they ask for the national organisation, which,

whatever it be called, is nothing but a monstrous, disciplined, hard-and-fast official staff. He goes on to show how this staff grows and hardens, and how it reacts on politics, and how industrial nationalisation will demoralise government, leading to a system wherein Parliament and Ministries become the resorts of those who promise most to their electors. In an ultra-democratic Constitution the ultimate effect of nationalisation is to place the pay, the hours, the conditions, of each industry in the hands of the workers themselves. No Minister of nationalised industry could refuse the demands of the workmen acting directly on the M.P.'s they elect.

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One of our burning questions is Bureaucracy ; for the advancing armies of Socialism wave banners which, whatever may be their professions, necessarily involve a multiple system of bureaucracy ; and, on the other hand, all who hold by our social order repudiate the extension of bureaucracy camouflaged under another name. And now we have a very timely book about the eminent civil servants of our age by one of the most eminent of them all. Sir Algernon West's *Contemporary Portraits*¹ is at once a memoir of the Civil Service of the Victorian era and a book of personal impressions and delightful anecdotes. For

¹ *Contemporary Portraits: Men of My Day in Public Life*, by the Right Honourable Sir Algernon West, G.C.B., with twenty-four illustrations, 8vo., Fisher Unwin, Ltd.

some forty years Sir Algernon has ably served his country, has been at the very centre of the official world under all administrations, and, as a member of many commissions, councils, and clubs, has known everyone and has heard of everything going. The result is a vivid picture of that vast and silent staff of officials who in practice work the British Empire, but who are so little known to the ordinary public—*ignotique longa Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.* One of the oldest of their comrades has now come forward “to sing the praises of good men” by a faithful record of what he has seen, not, as Isaac Walton puts it, “by vague reports and barren eulogies,” but by pictures of the men as they lived and worked.

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And these men did work. It is a story of indomitable energy, conscientious sacrifice to duty, patience, tact, and fairness, of which we may be proud. No Civil Service in the world—none, perhaps, in history—can show a better series of able men serving their country without any adequate reward and without recognition except from the statesmen and the sovereigns whose business they carried on. I can myself bear witness to the truth of these portraits. Though I have no pretension to be a civil servant, yet, as I have served on two Royal Commissions and sundry official Committees, and on the London County Council, and have been a member of many clubs and societies, I have known most of the persons

described and have been the friend of many of them. As I am a year older than Sir Algernon, my memory goes as far back, and, I think, is as sure as his, and I can certify to the accuracy of his portraits. All that he tells us of Lords Farrer and Lingen, of Sir Spencer Walpole, Sir Louis Mallet, Lord Welby, of Trollope, Arnold, Mowatt, Lushington, and Digby, bring back to me the men as I knew them, and have often served or debated in their company. I wish that Sir Algernon had written more of Sir Henry Maine, of Lord Hobhouse, of Herman Merivale, of Bertram Mitford, and of Lord Thring, each of whom had special gifts and individual tasks of their own.

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Let it not be supposed that this book about civil servants is a dull summary of official minutes. It is full of good things, of humorous anecdotes, and witticisms that do not often pass outside certain coteries and clubs. The old Dickens' Circumlocution clerks, we hear, were like the fountains "which play all day from 10 to 4." Alfred Montgomery, the last of the old dandies, rebuked a clerk in his shirt-sleeves by suggesting that he might take off his trousers; Lord Hammond's hall-porter excused his chief's absence: "for he had gone to a funeral—the only day's pleasureing he has had for four years." Matthew Arnold in his early economic days took "a blow-out" in Paris, and then mistook Frederick Leveson-Gower for his own chief, Lord Granville.

The Treasury complained that he did not stop at Edmonton: "How could I," said the Inspector, "when John Gilpin couldn't?" But the story that Arnold didn't know common plants and trees is quite ridiculous. He loved and knew Nature as well as Wordsworth or Tennyson. Gilbert's coat of arms and motto for Sir Blundell Maple was—*Cœur-de-lion in prison, Blondel m'appelle*. The history of No. 10 Downing Street is extremely interesting. The twenty-four illustrations are wonderfully life-like, especially those of Sir Algernon, of Mallet, Arnold, Farrer, Walpole, Trollope, Rowton, Welby, and Mowatt. The book altogether is one that fills a gap in the biographies of our time, and it ought to fill a gap in the shelves of any collection that calls itself a library.

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The first—the urgent—task of this Session must be to take in hand the appalling condition of Ireland. It threatens the very existence of the United Kingdom, of the Empire, of the Throne, of civilisation. For the moment, Ireland is practically a separate Republic, under military occupation and sporadic civil war. If this were to last, what becomes of our monarchic Constitution, of our Imperial position in the world? I say that this is the worst crisis that has befallen Britain for centuries. In these pages I have foreborne to meddle with the Irish dilemma, so tangled, so obscure, so inexplicable are the facts; and my own forecast of the future seemed so hopeless that

it might appear unpatriotic to state it. But now that my "Last Words"—perhaps my last days—are soon to close, I cannot but say that our country never was in more imminent peril.

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There is a general cry for a frank understanding between the British and the Irish peoples; and it is certain that now the people of Britain desire to accept whatever the Irish people claim, short of inflicting a deadly wound upon our own island. But how are we to get into touch with the Irish people, if the loudest voices in its name repudiate all dealings with the united nation's Government and Parliament? Who are the true representatives of Ireland? Where are they? What do they claim? This nation cannot deal with secret murder clubs nor with demagogues in America and overseas. For one nation to treat with another nation, both must have authorised persons to represent them and to bind their own nation by their contracts. Where are the Irish representatives, and who can show that they have power to pledge the Irish people? The actual Government of Soviet Russia are known persons, having visible power to make good their agreements if they choose to do so. But where are those who can pretend to speak for Ireland, to bind Ireland by any treaty they might sign?

* * * * *

I study the various proposals of our Elder States-

men ; and with all the spirit of goodwill and of peace they breathe, I fail to see how their schemes would work out. These wild, ill-disciplined, and barbarous reprisals must be sternly repressed. But what then, if civilians, officials, police, soldiers, continue to be murdered by secret assassins? If the Irish people claim to be at war, why continue the farce of civil law, juries, pensions, subsidies, and the whole pretence of carrying on civil government? If military occupation be necessary, it should be such as we honourably carry on now on the Rhine in the enemies' country. If all military occupation is monstrous, and, as Labour insists, all soldiers are to be withdrawn, who can guarantee but that parts of Ireland will follow the example of so many provinces of Russia, and break out in general chaos, plunder, and appropriation? And of all military manœuvres, the gradual withdrawal from an enemy country is the most difficult, as the German Army found in November, 1918. If Ireland were to have a separate army and absolute control of all ports and shipping, the maintenance of British trade and commerce, and the very safety of this country, would be at the mercy of enemy factions.

* * * * *

The essential question is : How can the British people be brought into free speech with the Irish people? The Home Rule Bill, even amended and enlarged, will not do that. What will? I do not pretend to say what would. But it happens that a

scheme of this kind, obviously "heroic," was shown to me, was submitted to Government then engaged in drafting the Bill. It was proposed by an Englishman, a resident landowner in the disturbed West of Ireland. His idea was this. Let freely-chosen delegates from Ireland meet an equal body of delegates from Britain, and try to frame a treaty of peace, as if they were sent by two nations that had been carrying on a desultory war. The Irish delegates were not to be nominated by the British Government, nor was any condition to be imposed on them by the British Parliament. They were to be free representatives of the Irish people, to treat in their name.

Such was the "heroic" scheme of an English gentleman living on his property in Ireland and in close touch with the farm people around him. But how were free delegates from Ireland to be found? What would be their authority if they were found? If that were the only difficulty, it could be got over at once. There are at present 105 duly elected M.P.'s from Ireland, of whom, unfortunately, we only see at Westminster a very small contingent. Suppose that the whole of these Irish M.P.'s chose in Dublin, say, five (or seven) delegates, and that the British House of Commons in Westminster chose an equal number. Let the chosen meet in friendly interviews in an independent spot—say the Isle of Man—with an independent chairman—say from an Overseas Dominion, such as General Smuts. It is no doubt a highly unconstitutional vision, though scarcely more wild than that of some current schemes.

But, at any rate, it might give an intelligible answer to the question: What do the Irish people claim which the British people can accept?

* * * * *

DECEMBER

— 1920 —

XII

O F all the problems produced by the World War and the chaos it left, none is more urgent than the reorganisation of the United Kingdom and the Dominions of the Crown. Our antique, unique, abnormal Constitution is obviously unfit for its new task. The great overseas Commonwealths are loudly calling for admission to the government of the Empire. What a change it is since a hundred years ago they were the "Colonies"! India, once the possession of a trading company, is receiving a Liberal Constitution, and grumbles fiercely that it is "not good enough." Ireland declares itself to be an independent Republic, and in parts it is so in fact. "Home Rule all round" is the universal cry, the inevitable demand of the vast populations who in war have proved their force and their ambitions—people who are to Britain what the Roman world was to Rome when Julius Caesar admitted them to power as the equals of Old Rome.

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The Empires are passing away! And, not only are they becoming Republics, but they are disintegrating

into ethnic, internecine Republics. Germany, Austria, Russia, Turkey, China, have thrown off Emperors, and with the Balkan and the Baltic races are setting up a network of national governments. The Covenant and the solvent cry of Self-determination have whirled round the world and have started fermentations more potent than any of Rousseau, Luther, or Peter the Hermit. Nowhere have they found a soil so well prepared as in the so-called British Empire, which is made up of thirty or forty separate nations, distinct in language, religion, laws, and habits. It is high time that the relations of these forty nations to Parliament and our anomalous Constitution were revised with a view to real facts. France, the United States, Switzerland, Portugal, were Republics with no Emperors, no subject nationalities of any importance. The enormous extent and infinite diversity of those we govern makes the task almost insoluble, and it is monstrous to leave them in the hands of that effete institution—the Parliament at Westminster.

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I honour and respect our statesmen whose honesty, public spirit, self-control, and good sense are unequalled in any age; but they are at the mercy of adventurers and nonentities. The practice and tone of Parliament were formed when it consisted of a single class—a governing class, of wealth, high breeding, a common education, and loyalty to the Crown and Constitution. Ministers continue these anti-

quated civilities in face of a noisy opposition which is often like a park meeting of rebels and traitors. Pitt, Canning, Peel, Gladstone, Disraeli, thought they had done enough when they had convinced "honourable gentlemen" of their policy and intentions. Ministers still keep up the old etiquette, though "the people" neither know nor care for what they say, and despise the Parliamentary babble as a mere blind, except that some treasonable "question," or some mendacious insult is "reported" far and wide by the gutter Press. Ministers are satisfied if they can assure "their honourable friend" that "the rumours are incorrect." What they should do is to speak to the People in language that the People understand.

* * * * *

It is recognised now that Parliament in its present form is an effete institution, because it obstinately clings to forms and functions which were devised when all the conditions were different. A century or two ago it was the Legislature of a moderate kingdom ruled by a patriotic "governing class." Now it is the Executive public meeting pretending to rule over an unwieldy agglomeration of nationalities permeated with unrest, sedition, and revolution. The House of Commons is three times too numerous: it is choked with its antique rules, forms, and conventions; it has one hundred times too much to do, with impossible tasks over which it mumbles and blunders in idle talk. A rational executive body should not contain more than a dozen members; a rational legislative body

should not contain more than 300 members. If either such body sat for more than three or four hours, it would degenerate into a club, open to gossip, amusements, and casual attendance. The Sessions are still arranged as they were when fox-hunting squires cheered Mr. Walpole and "good society" trusted Mr. Pitt. The paraphernalia of first and second readings, Committee stage, and report stage were invented when the House consisted, not only of honourable gentlemen, but of good citizens who knew "that the King's Government must be carried on," and before obstruction had been perfected into a fine art. So, too, Questions, once an honest inquiry about two or three points of importance, have swollen into the hundreds of bogus insinuations, in which Ministers display their power of equivocation and rebels can trumpet their treasonable calumnies—the only things the People's journals report in conspicuous headlines.

* * * * *

All these evils have grown worse under every Government, and never were so mischievous as in this time of chaos and our urgent tasks of reconstruction. Some years ago, in essays in the *Nineteenth Century*,¹ I tried to describe them and their remedies. It was proposed to reduce the number of members, to have short sittings, regular Sessions at reasonable intervals,

¹ *House of Commons*, i. and ii. *Nineteenth Century*, vols. x. and xi., Sept., 1881, Jan., 1882.

limitation of Questions, of "Readings," time-limit of speeches as worked so well in the London County Council—above all, reference of Bills, not of Committees of the whole House, but, on the admirable French plan, to special Committees of about eleven, chosen by proportional systems from the House, each charged with departmental subjects—Foreign Affairs, Finance, Army, Navy, Law, Home, India, Dominions, and so on, with power to summon Ministers, regularly examine them and their documents, if need be in private, and report to the whole House. These essays were submitted to Mr. Gladstone, not by me, and, I need not say, were utterly condemned by him as if I had put a rash hand on the Ark of the Covenant. In all matters of Parliamentary practice Mr. Gladstone was a rank Conservative—I trust he was the last. A time-limit to speeches, he thought, would be as horrible as to return to judicial torture.

* * * * *

All this no doubt involves an entire reconstruction of our Parliamentary system, and even a revision of the Constitution. It is to that I am coming. Already by law, if not yet in practice, one of the three kingdoms has a Parliament of its own—indeed, two Parliaments. This has broken up the Parliamentary system, and makes it inevitable that Scotland, Wales, and England should have national assemblies of their own. Some people think that England may be divided into North and South, or East and West—if not the vast metropolitan area as a further unit.

Then comes the problem of unifying these national bodies, as well as the claim of the Dominions and of India to enter the Imperial Council. It is a complex and tremendous problem, but it is inevitable and urgent. The new Irish Bill, and the claims of the Overseas Commonwealths, force it upon us. This is not the place to discuss it, and I do not presume even to offer any scheme of the kind ; but it must be faced —and at once. Furthermore, it involves the re-organisation of our whole system of Imperial Government, and, indeed, of our venerable British Constitution itself. Nearly every State in Europe has revised its Constitution in recent years.

* * * * *

There is nothing sacred, eternal, monumental, about our Constitution—which has the unique quality of being neither written nor rigid, nor inflexible, nor protected against change and development as is the case in France and the United States. The singular thing, as de Tocqueville said, is that there is “no British Constitution.” It is composed of ancient Acts of Parliament, amending Acts, explanatory Acts, various traditions, customs, immemorial practices, judicial decisions, and Parliamentary resolutions. This composite mass of laws, rules, judgments, customs, and traditions has never been published with any official authority ; but, what is still more remarkable, it can be completely altered and replaced by a single Act of Parliament. There is nothing treasonable or even irregular in proposing a

drastic revision of the Constitution. A drastic revision has even begun. As the Irish Bill has broken into our Parliamentary system, which the cry of Home Rule all round radically breaks up, so the imminence of a sort of Irish Republic challenges the very tenure of the Crown. If this were to be continued in any form, our coins, proclamations, protocols and banknotes would have to be varied. "The United Kingdom," *Britt. Omn. Rex*, would become as obsolete as *Franc. Rex*.

* * * * *

I am far from regretting that we have no written and rigid Law of the Constitution. The fact that it can at any time be amended by Act of Parliament has great advantages, at least for a nation that once was "Left Centre," and it suits our practical, compromising, and illogical turn of mind. But now, the Constitution is actually being changed in the regular way, and far greater changes are urgent and inevitable. It might be well, then, to consolidate the mass of Constitutional rules which suit us to-day in a single new Act which would be what on the Continent they call "an organic law." To protect it as being final or unalterable would be idle. Such a consolidating Act would have to express the constitution and powers of the Central Imperial Council (and I can imagine these to be quite limited and few), the constitution and powers of the national assemblies, and, I trust, a Senate of some kind, elective as in France and the United States, the relative powers of

National, County, and Municipal bodies, the law of National and Local taxation, and, finally, the rights, obligations, and hereditary succession of the Crown. All this is a big task ; but the Future is rolling up with imperious challenges to deal at least with some of them at present. And real statesmen should consider a systematic plan on which they can all be solved in a form at once practical, masterly, and in the spirit of British traditions.

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These various branches of a complete Constitution hang together, and they cannot be treated independently. They react on each other and must be regarded as related parts of a systematic whole. It is a big task, but not more arduous than that of the great men who framed the Constitution of the United States. I trust we can find men of foresight equal to Franklin, Washington, Patrick Henry, and their colleagues. Even in recent memory we have seen successful new Constitutions evolved out of revolution and war by France, by Italy, by Brazil, by Germany, Portugal, Japan, and China. Most of our own problems have been more or less treated and at least prepared by various Commissions, Councils, and volumes —e.g., the Imperial Conference of 1911, the Speaker's Conference on Devolution, Lord Bryce's Committee on a Second Chamber, the King's remarkable foundation of the House of Windsor to supersede that of Hanover or Este ; lastly, by such books as those of Sir W. Anson, Mr. Bagehot, Mr.

A. V. Dicey, Lord Bryce, and other lawyers of great official experience. Every point has been fully discussed, but no action has resulted. All have been snowed under by the avalanche of unbusiness-like business which chokes both Government and Parliament.

The famous Act—12-13 Will: and Mary, 1700-1701 A.D.—is commonly called the Act of Settlement, but its settlement has been frequently amended and revised; and in its central point it has become flagrantly odious to our feelings to-day. Of that presently. But there are incidental anomalies. The bitter struggle which overthrew the Stuarts of Roman faith has long passed. Parliament and office are now open to all sects of Protestants, to Catholics, to Jews, to all forms of belief—biblical or ethical, agnostic or materialist. There are millions of our Catholic fellow-subjects in England, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and everywhere, and it is monstrous to exclude Catholics from such offices as that of Lord Chancellor, Lord Keeper, and Viceroy in Ireland. I would go further, and would delete from the Act the words “being a Protestant.” What is a Protestant? Am I a Protestant? Certainly, I protest against citizens being excluded from public duty in consequence of any religious faith they hold—or do not hold. Not merely must the Sovereign “be a Protestant,” but he “must join in communion with the Church of England.” What about the Church of Scotland? This limitation in the Oath of the Coronation Ceremony to a religious body which is but an

infinitesimal part of the King's subjects is contrary to all modern ideas of religious equality, and, what is worse, the Oath requires the Sovereign "to preserve to the Bishops and clergy of the Churches committed to their charge their rights and privileges." We know what trouble this Oath caused in the time of the Catholic Emancipation and to Victoria in the Disestablishment of the Church of England in Ireland. In the imminent Disestablishment of the Church of England in England, what is going to be done? In truth, much in the Coronation Ceremony and the barbaric rites copied from Byzantine Emperors in the tenth century, and certainly the Sectarian Oath will have to be revised.

* * * * *

I come now to the vital point—the Succession to the Crown. On the childlessness of the Stuart Protestants in 1700 the Crown was limited to the "heirs of the body of Sophia, wife of the Elector of Hanover." There are now dozens of such descendants in the Hohenzollerns, Tsars, ex-Empress of Austria, besides princelets in Germany, Austria, Italy, and Spain. It would amuse a genealogist to make a list of the men and women who are "heirs of the body of the Electress Sophia," most of them undesirables, many of them enemies, and some of them infamous. It is urgent to find a new root for the title to our Throne.

* * * * *

An obvious name is that of Queen Victoria. But to that there are three objections. It does not free us at all from the foreign families, from Hohenzollerns and some of our worst enemies in German dukeries. It has much of that incongruous, genealogic jumble that attaches to the Electress Sophia. Lastly, it belongs to the Victorian world that has passed away. The name of King Edward VII. also brings in foreign royalties and it is pre-war.

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Now I make bold to affirm that a new settlement of hereditary right to the Throne should be based on our honoured Lord, King George V. He represents to the whole Empire the world-war, the new world, our hopes of a purer social order. The war was the most tremendous struggle, the direst peril in our history; and through it all George was the personal embodiment of our courage, our energy, and our faith in our cause. Daily in ten thousand gatherings rang out: God save the King! He is the only one of our Sovereigns for nearly two centuries who ever led our armies in the field. He was with his men in France; he was with his seamen in the Fleet. From the first days of August, 1914, to the last days of November, 1918, King George and his family fought, worked, spoke, and lived as no English King ever yet did.

* * * * *

I say that it would be a just tribute by the nation in memory of all it owes to him and to his if King

George were officially enacted as the source of a new dynasty. With admirable judgment he has himself cast off all outlandish family names, has called his own the House of Windsor, and his collaterals by familiar English place-names. Let Parliament, then, cast off outlandish princes as having any claim to the blood-royal of England. Not only has the war given to King George a part that has never been filled by any king since the Conquest, but his personal record as a devoted public servant and truly good man stands above them all. I am no courtier and I know no more of Courts than the man in the street; but as an historian I can recall no other English king since Alfred who was stainless in every phase of public duty and domestic life, who was in every aspect of kingship all that should be the real Head of the State and the first gentleman in England.

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And we have the same hopes in his family for the future. No Prince, neither Richard the Crusader, nor Harry of Monmouth, nor Harry Tudor, ever brought royalty home to the Britons at home and overseas as does our popular Prince of Wales. His personality and his ubiquity have illuminated the institution of princedom and have knit up the Empire as nothing before has done. Burke said John Howard had "made a circumnavigation of charity." The Prince makes circumnavigations of English manhood. Like his father—soldier, seaman, sportsman, student, speaker, hard worker, "good fellow"—he goes

round the world showing it what the best type of young Englishman is, as no Prince before ever did or could do.

There are some functions of kingship which should be amended in any new Act of Settlement. We trust that the odious appendage of Emperor will be deleted from the King's title. It was one of Disraeli's Arabian Nights, as we now know disliked by Victoria and Edward. The war has seen the disappearance of four mighty Empires. It was their Imperial character which was their ruin. Let us cast out that word of evil omen. The oligarchy under the Hanoverian kings sought to make them their tools, deprived the Throne of power, and were afraid of royal favourites. There is one function that should be restored in practice to the King. He is "the fountain of honour," and all honours, titles, honorific offices in Court should be placed absolutely in his own gift, to the exclusion of any Minister. So we might get rid of the scandalous sale of titles, the exclusion of rivals, the personal intrigues, and all the dirty secrets of a Prime Minister's office box. If "honours" there have to be, I would rather trust a King than a Minister. At the same time, a pompous apparatus of forms and etiquette could be got rid of—medieval and even Victorian rules about standing, kneeling, kissing hands, chamberlain's gymnastics, and dragging harassed, sick, exhausted Ministers to Balmoral, in a crisis. And with this, the Prime Minister's daily letter to the Sovereign, as seen in the *Lives* of Gladstone and Beaconsfield. The King, as of old, should

be authorised to sit in a Cabinet Council, not as Chairman, nor as a member, but to understand questions of special moment. I would even allow him to listen in silence to debates in either House. He should be recognised as the true "Patriot King"—and this George V. is and will be.

* * * * *

But there is something farther, and I cannot withhold my conviction that the monarchic principle is itself deeply shaken. Four mighty Empires crashed for ever during five years of war; the Brazilian and the Chinese some years earlier. But over the civilised world republics have been taking the place of monarchies. When I was at school the only republic in Europe was the Swiss. There are now about a dozen, covering two-thirds of the whole continent. Except our own, the only Thrones of the larger States are those of Italy and Spain; and neither promises much support to the monarchic principle. For half a century republics have been supplanting monarchies. The war, chaos, and the New Order have created a landslide in favour of democratic republics. No one can count on there being any kings left at the end of the century. When you once have accepted unlimited democracy, the inevitable step is the Republic.

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Now there are in the United Kingdom two main aspects to the monarchic problem. The first is the

noble stimulus to patriotism, self-devotion, and national union which is given by loyalty and honour for our King as embodying the peoples of our race. It is said that with some of our overseas compatriots faith in King and Prince is the one remaining bond of union ; and in Canada, New Zealand, India, it is a governing link of incalculable power. Against this must be put the fact that the republican idea is deep-set in Ireland, in parts of Scotland, in the north and centre of England, in Australia, in South Africa, and even in London blazes out with revolutionary violence such as Cabinets and Parliaments prefer to ignore rather than to crush. It is in vain to treat this as merely the explosion of "extremists." Behind them there is in the democracy a deep, widespread, indomitable faith in the republic as the normal form of the State in all three Kingdoms and Overseas.

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I believe that both sides of this problem of Monarchy could be met, if in any re-settlement of the Constitution our country were frankly to be styled the Commonwealth, or Union of Commonwealths, which it is, and George V. and his successors were to be styled their Hereditary Chief. The historic halo and romantic traditions which gather round our Royal House are priceless and irreplaceable. No country has such a record in the thousand years since Alfred ; and it would be brutal to cast it away when its flame never burned so bright and so pure. For two centuries the Republic of Holland owed allegiance to the

dynasty of their glorious Founder, William the Silent, as their hereditary Head. Our dynasty has a longer and a more splendid story to record. If democracy, as seems inevitable, will not stand kings, the invaluable traditions of loyalty might yet be preserved in a Royal House. The style of our Head in any new Act of Settlement would be :

Hereditary Chief of the United Commonwealths.

* * * * *

A word as to each part of this title. President is a temporary and *bourgeois* office; and, except in U.S.A., with no traditions or glamour about it at all. Hereditary Chief is a title well known in Scotland, in Africa, in India. Commonwealth is a fine old English word, and is free from associations with Latin and French republics. The plural Commonwealths would remind men of the many nations in these islands and of overseas nations who join under the same flag. We might avoid the name British, which, even more than English, may meet racial antipathies in Ireland, as English or Saxon would do in Scotland and in Wales; and British may have an irritating sound in Australia, in South Africa, in India. "United Commonwealths" raises no question of race, and suggests no race predominance or national precedence. The twentieth century will see the end of feudal institutions, let us hope by a peaceful evolution into far broader social institutions. The Crown is a typical institution of feudalism, as much in its chivalrous side

as in its oppressive side. And whenever the passion for the republican ideal, which now moves civilised man from China to Peru, shall force Englishmen to join with all others of English speech, it may be possible to preserve and even to increase the prestige of a Royal House—and all its incalculable influence for good.

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